MITHRIACA II

THE MITHRAEUM AT PONZA

ÉTUDES PRÉLIMINAIRES AUX RELIGIONS ORIENTALES DANS L'EMPIRE ROMAIN

PUBLIÉES PAR

M. J. VERMASEREN

TOME SEIZIÈME

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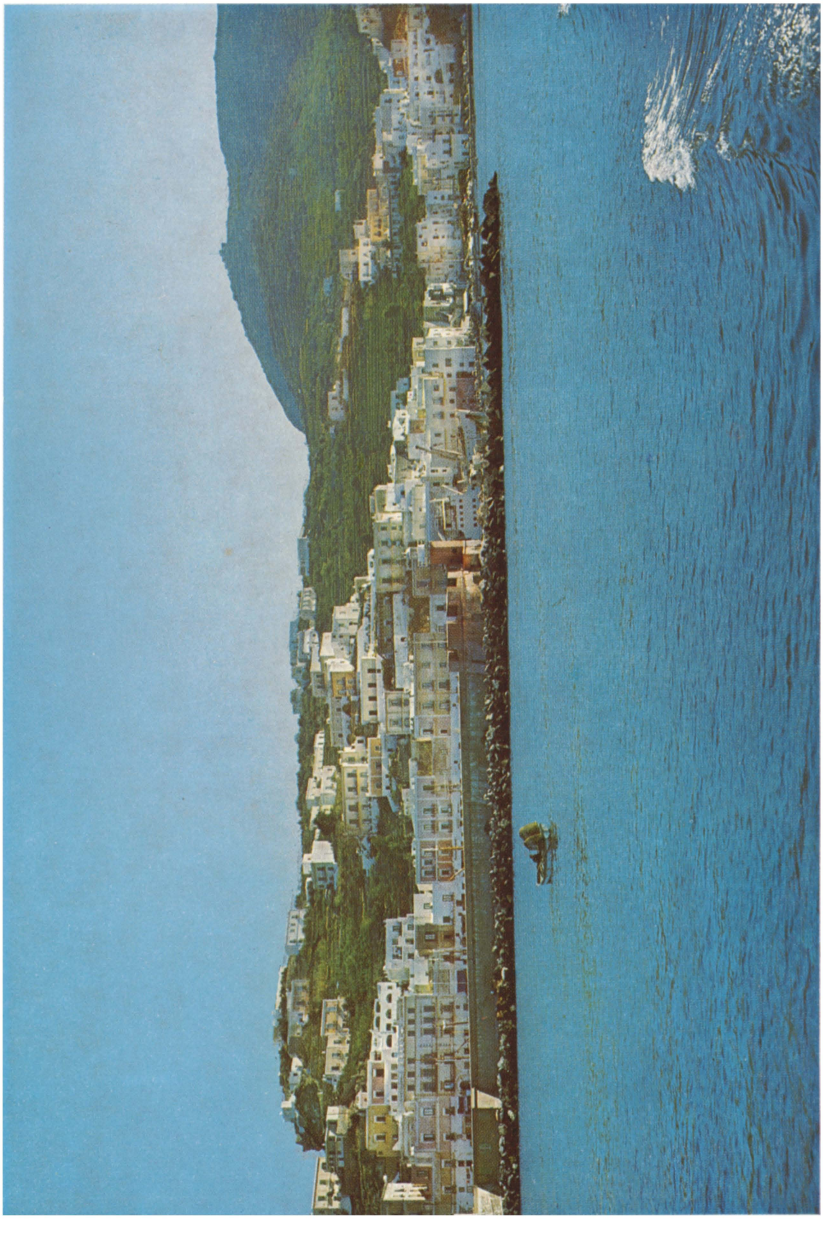

M. J. VERMASEREN

MITHRIACA II

THE MITHRAEUM AT PONZA

WITH A FRONTISPIECE, 7 FIGURES AND 34 PLATES

LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
1974

RIJKSMUSEUM VAN OUDHEDEN
TE LEIDEN

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PRINTED IN BELGIUM

To Professor
Ferdinand Jozef M. de Waele
and his wife Eirene

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PREFACE

It is now more than thirty-five years ago that Professor Ferdinand Jozef de Waele guided my first steps in the rich field of archaeology at the University of Nijmegen. This compatriot of Franz Cumont and pupil of C. W. Vollgraff showed me the way to the study of the cult of Mithras and the other oriental religions and, in so doing, towards the Universities of Utrecht, Paris and Rome. May this small book be a witness to a true friendship [1] which came into being in difficult times near the *Castra* of Ulpia Noviomagus. This book contains only a few pages, but these treat for the first time an unique and precious document of Roman Art and Religion—the zodiac of the isle of Ponza.

During my study of the Mithraeum of Ponza in August 1969 I was assisted by my wife, Mrs M. E. C. Vermaseren-van Haaren, and Miss Margreet B. de Boer. Permission for publication has kindly been given by Professor Pietro Griffo, former Soprintendente of Lazio, and Dottore Baldo Conticello. The beautiful photographs are the work of Antonio Solazzi and the careful drawings that of my friend Ottorino Cappabianca. The sketch of the zodiac and the map of Ponza have been drawn by Mrs Franca and Mr Joop Derksen. Last but not least must be mentioned that our work at Ponza was facilitated in the most friendly way by the late D'Arco Biagio and his daughter Teresa. They have been the real conservators of this interesting archaeological monument. I should also like to thank Mr T. A. Edridge for his help with the English of this volume.

I think I can be sure that the pages about the constellation of the Bears will interest all bear lovers and especially two small friends Richard Maarten Harris (Copenhagen) and Marc Maarten Derksen (Vianen).

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[1] Iulian, *Ep.*, 428 B (p. 8 *ed.* Bidez - Cumont = p. 10 *ed.* B. K. Weiss) : *Νῦν δή σοι δῶρον, ὦ φίλη κεφαλή, δίδωμι μικρὸν μὲν ὅπερ ἔστί, χαρίεν δὲ φίλῳ παρὰ φίλου, οἴκοθεν οἴκαδε, κατὰ τὸν σοφὸν ποιητὴν Πίνδαρον.*

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE MITHRAEUM AT PONZA

In 1950 Father L. M. Dies [1] published a little guide to the isle of Ponza. This island, known as Pontiae [2] in Antiquity, is situated in the Tyrrhenean Sea opposite Terracina. Like Monte Circeo,[3] Gaeta and especially Sperlonga,[4] Ponza "the pearl of Rome" has in the past century been connected with the wanderings of Odysseus, the most famous of heroes. Hence the comparison of Ponza "l'isola lunata, isoletta graziossissima" where "la donna è evoluta, distinta, agiata, sensibile al bello, che in lei si transfonde dal mare, del cielo, dal panorama luminoso che la circonda" and where the full-bodied wines are the "buoni testimoni delle segrete forze del suolo e degli aromi delle nostre marine" [5] with the isle where the sorceress Circe lived which was described by the poet (*Od.*, κ 195) as:

> *νῆσον, τήν πέρι πόντος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωται.*

Yet, life on this marvellous isle was not always as pleasant as most authors describe it. Boccacio refers to it in the Decameron as the land of oblivion, because he knew that in the early Imperial period it served

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[1] L. M. Dies, *Ponza, perla di Roma*, Roma 1950, at present the most recent survey. Earlier publications: G. B. Fortis, *Osservazioni litografiche su l'isole di Ventotene e Ponza*, Padova 1793; G. C. Tricoli, *Monografia per le isole del gruppo Ponziano*, Napoli 1855; M. Bieber, *Die Ponza Insel im Tirrenischen Meer*, Berlin 1925; For more recent finds: L. Jacono in *NSc* (S. VI) II, 1926, 219ff; A. Maiuri in *Boll. d'Arte* (S. II) VI, 1926, 224-232; F. M. Apollonj Ghetti, *L'arcipelago pontino nella storia del medio Tirreno. Cronache delle isole di Roma fino al secolo XVIII*, Roma 1969.

[2] Pandataria or Pandateria and Pontia are mentioned by Strabo, 2, 5, 19 C 123 and V, 3, 6, C 233 without any details of interest. See Hofmann in PWRE 43 *s.v.* Pontiae; Pontiae insulae, *cols* 21-24; H. Nissen, *Italische Landeskunde*, Berlin 1883-1902; reprint Amsterdam 1967.

[3] S. Aurigemma - A. Bianchini - A. de Santis, *Circeo, Terracina, Fondi*, Roma 1957.

[4] G. Jacopi, *L'antro di Tiberio*, Roma 1965. Recently: R. Hampe, *Sperlonga und Vergil*, Mainz 1972; G. Säflund, *The Polyphemus and Scylla Groups at Sperlonga*, Stockholm 1972; H. Lavagne, *Le Nymphée au Polyphème de la Domus Aurea* in *MEFR* 82, 1970, 673-721.

[5] Dies, *o.c.*, 26; 28.

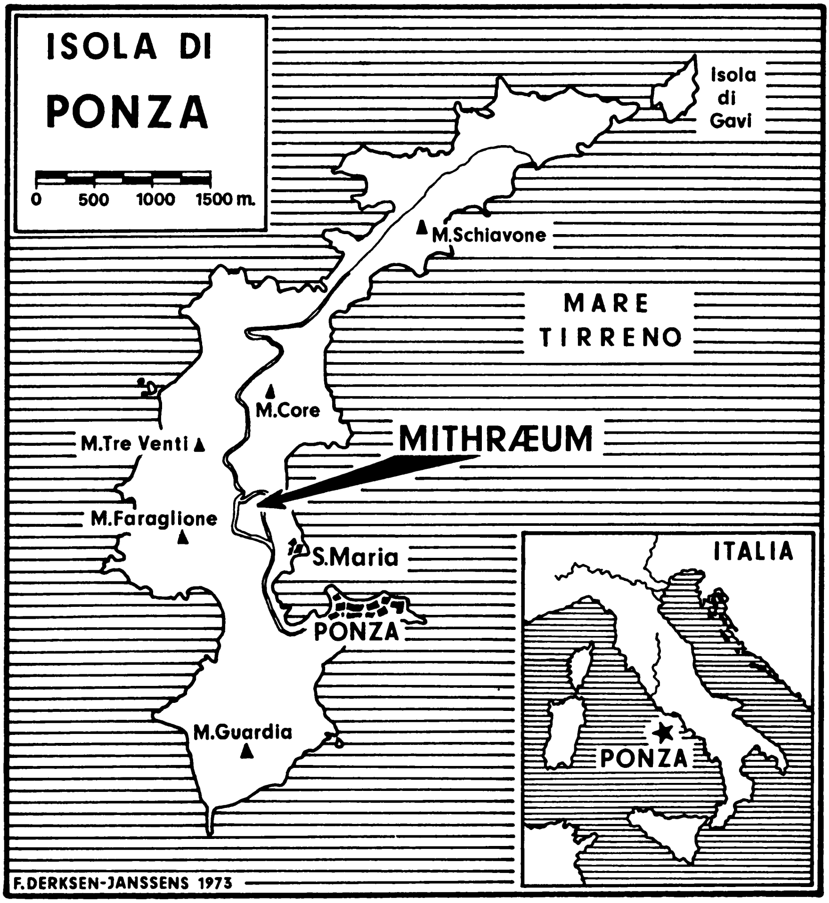
ISOLA DI PONZA
0 500 1000 1500 m.
Isola di Gavi
M.Schiavone
MARE TIRRENO
M.Core
MITHRÆUM
M.Tre Venti
M.Faraglione
S.Maria
PONZA
M.Guardia
ITALIA
PONZA
F.DERKSEN-JANSSENS 1973

Fig. 1

as a place of exile. Indeed, the first Emperor Augustus exiled his own daughter Julia to Pandataria (= Ventotene), one of the *Pontiae insulae* (Fig. 1), a story vividly told by Carcopino [1] in connexion with the exile of the poet Ovid to Tomi. Suetonius [2] mentions that immediately after succeeding of Tiberius, the young Caligula went to Pandataria and Ponza in order to take the urns of his mother and his brother personnally to the Mausoleum Augusti[1] on the banks of the Tiber : *confestim Pandateriam et Pontias ad transferendos matris fratrisque cineres festinavit.* But this same Caligula banished his sisters Julia Agrippina (the mother of the future Emperor Nero) and Julia Livilla to Ponza in 39 A.D.[2] where they remained until recalled in A.D.41 by Claudius; Caligula's second wife Livia Orestilla died there in exile. At the end of the first century Domitian is said to have exiled to Ponza Flavia Domitilla, whose body was brought later to Rome and buried in the catacombs on the Via Ardeatina that still bear her name.[3] According to the legend Nereus and Achilleus, who were also Christians, followed their mistress into exile and having been beheaded in Terracina were united with her in death in the same catacomb.[4]

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[1] J. Carcopino, *Rencontres de l'histoire et de la littérature romaines*, Paris 1963, Ch. II *L'exil d'Ovide, poète néopythagoricien.*

[2] Suetonius, *Caligula*, 15. *Cf.* Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 53. The elder Agrippina and her eldest son Nero were banished by Tiberius at the instigation of Sejanus. See Philo,

Ponza served as a station for the Roman navy from the fourth century B.C.[5] There were three ports (*Venus*, *Circe* and *diva Luna*) and in difficult times the inhabitants of the isle were so faithful, that August finally

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in Flaccum, 3, 9; Tacitus, *Ann.*, V, 3 ff. See also F. H. Cramer, *Astrology in Roman Law and Politics*, Philadelphia 1954, 105. Agrippina's second son Drusus was imprisoned and like his mother committed suicide (Cass. Dio 58.22); the youngest son Caius lived on Capri.

[1] *Cf.* CIL VI 886.

[2] Cass. Dio 59, 22. Concerning the conspiracy see CIL VI 32 346 : *ob detecta nefaria consilia Cn. Lentuli Gaetulici.*

[3] Suetonius, *Cal.*, 25, 1; Cass. Dio 59, 8, 7. See also : J. P. Balsdon, *The Emperor Gaius*, Oxford 1934; idem, *Notes Concerning the Principate of Gaius* in *JRS* 24, 1934, 13-24; M. Gelzer in *PWRE* X *col.* 381 ff.

[4] Eusebius, *H.E.*, III, 18 (I, p. 236 *ed.* K. Lake - J. E. L. Coulton); Jerome, *Ep.*, CVIII, 7 (V, p. 164 *ed.* J. Labourt) : *delata ad insulam Pontias, quam clarissimae memoriae quondam feminarum sub Domitiano principe pro confessione nominis christiani Flaviae Domitillae nobilitavit exilium, vidensque cellulas....* Both these texts mention the younger Flavia Domitilla, a *niece* of Flavius Clemens, consul in 95 A.D. Cassius Dio 67, 13 relates however that Flavia Domitilla, the *wife* of Flavius Clemens, was exiled to Pandataria. About this question and about the cemetery of Domitilla near the Via Ardeatina : O. Marucchi, *Guida del Cimitero di Domitilla*, Roma 1925^2; O. Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, Roma 1933, 135 ff, especially 139; for the more recent finds : P. Testini, *Le catacombe e gli antichi cimiteri cristiani a Roma*, Bologna 1966, 52 f.

[5] Livy, IX, 28.

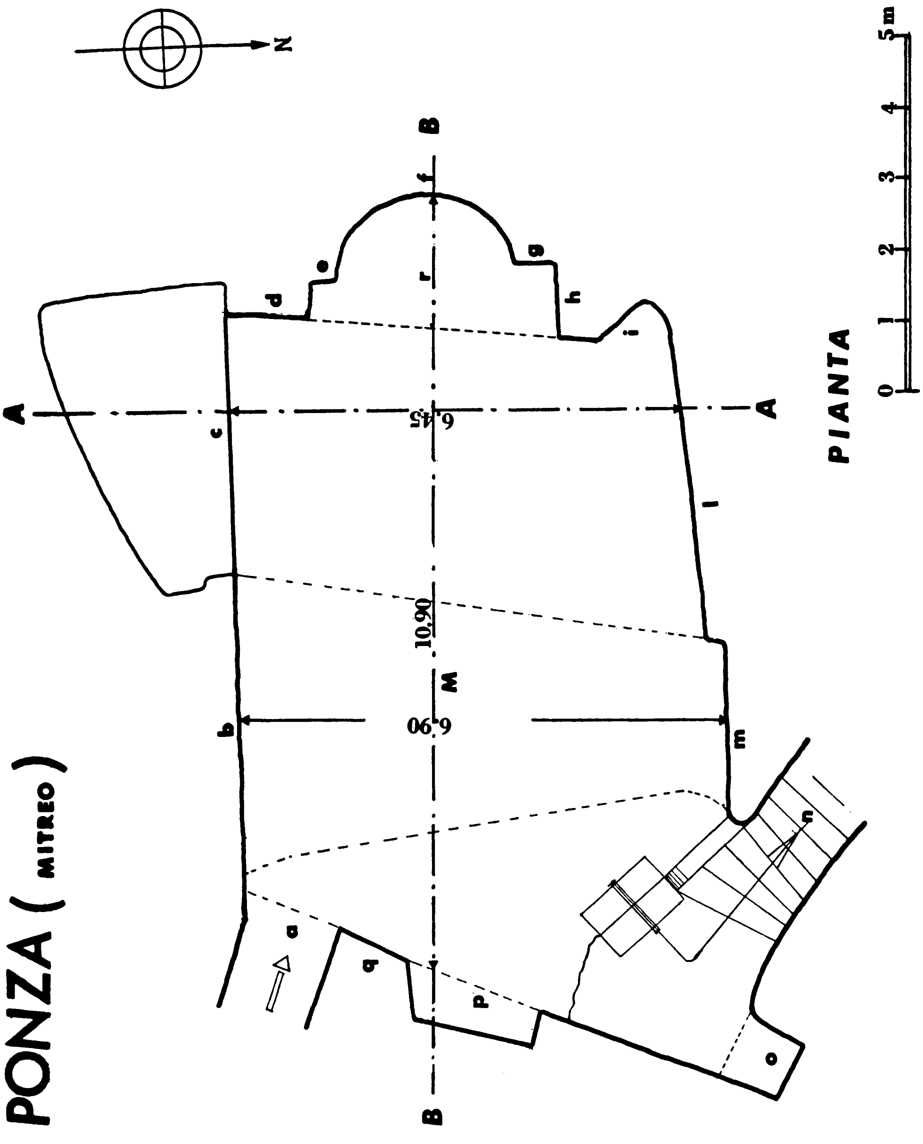
PONZA (MITREO)
PIANTA
N
A
A
B
B
6,45
10,90
6,90
M
a
b
c
d
e
f
g
h
i
l
m
n
o
p
q
r
0
1
2
3
4
5m

Fig. 2

bestowed Roman citizenship upon them *optimo iure.*[1] Near the second port (now that of S. Maria) a Mithraeum was discovered about a century ago. It has however remained comparatively unknown and neglected (Pl. I).[2] It is situated under the Palazzo Tagliamonte in the Salita Scalpellini and may be entered through the building that housed the photographic studio of the late D'Arco Biagio, Corso Carlo Pisicane 19. The original entrance to the *speleum* (Fig. 2) at its northern side is now partly obstructed by the foundations of the Palazzo. At the present time there

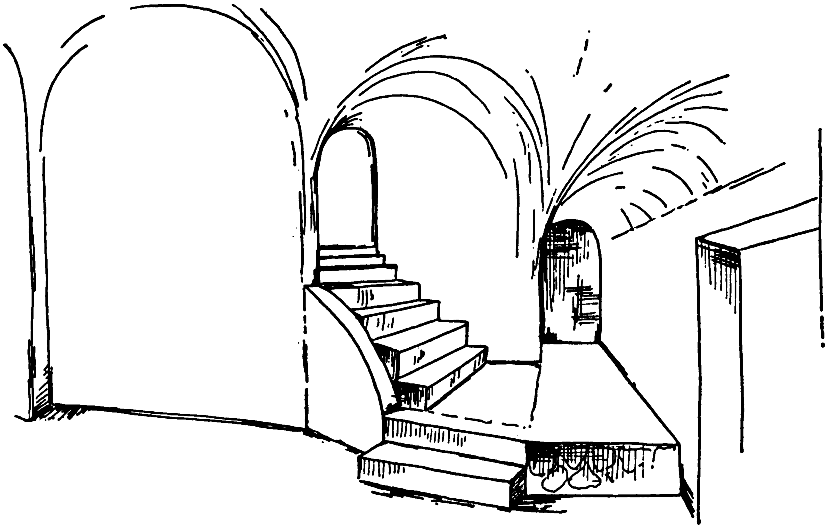

Fig. 3

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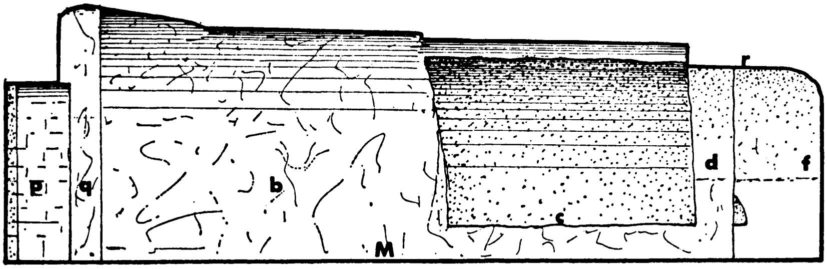
[1] For *optimum ius*: V. A. Georgescu, *Optimus şi optimus maximus în tehnica juridică Romană* in *Studii Clasice* X, 1968, 185 ff.

[2] Dies, *o.c.*, 92 ff sketches the situation but without any details. The Mithraeum must be made more easily accessible. According to F. M. Apollonj Ghetti, 48 the zodiac is mentioned in the unpublished manuscript by Pasquale Mattei, *L'Ausonia ovvero istoria cronologica antica e moderna delle principali città ora componenti il distretto di Gaeta*, I Napoli 1866, II Napoli 1867-1869. This manuscript is in the Biblioteca Vallicelliana at Rome (Inv. nos T 118-119) and describes the zodiac as follows: "Più appariscente negli indizii di culto religioso che di privata destinazione è uno speco avente nelle pareti reticolate qualche nicchia a mo'di larario, ed alcuni deboli avanzi di figure di animali modellate in basso rilievo. Nel concavo della volta meglio appariscono i segni dello Zodiaco ed un serpente nel centro."

is a flight of eight steps, then comes a little platform and two further steps leading into the temple (Fig. 3). The vaulted chamber itself (L.10.90 W.6.90-6.45) is irregular of construction and ends in an apse directed towards the west (Pl. II). The cave is therefore to be added to the small number of other Mithraic temples with an East-West orientation that according to LeRoy Campbell [1] show Graeco-Iranian influence. It is probable that this orientation was "governed by physical necessities" as in the rock-sanctuary of Rožanec,[2] and this seems clear too from the construction of both *podia* and the cult-niche. The side benches do not begin at the same distance from the niche; also strange is the fact that above the ends of these benches an oblique ridge has been traced in the vault of the sanctuary. A low and deep (1.00-2.50) podium (*c*) has been let into the left side-wall (L.3.65); on the vault above this are traces of yellow (Fig. 4; section BB). On the right side however the wall juts out where the podium begins (*l*); of the bench itself only few traces are preserved. At the end of the wall is a small niche (*i*) which gives the impression of being natural and not having been made for a statue.



SEZIONE B~B

Fig. 4

The floor of the Mithraeum has been made of stamped earth (*terra battuta*) but does not form a real aisle. The cult-niche is also irregular (Pl. II) and shows at its front an oblique ridge or inclination to those at the beginnings of the *podia.* The masons were only partly successful in giving a more regular appearance to the niche by cutting away some parts of the rock and by stuccoing the walls with dark red (Fig. 5; section A-A). The niche (*f*) has the form of an apse and on its backwall at the height of about a metre a ridge is visible that is possibly the only remnant preserved of the usual raised dais. At either side of the niche is a pilaster (*e*; *g*).

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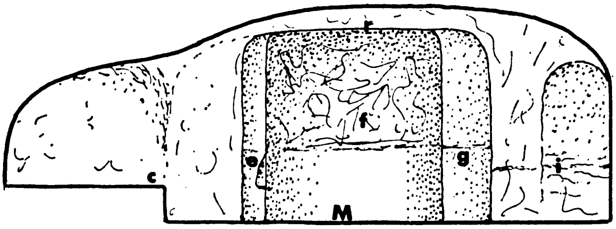
[1] LeRoy A. Campbell, *Mithraic Iconography and Ideology*, Leiden 1968, 53 group 4.

[2] Vermaseren, *CIMRM* II no 1481.

The group of the victorious Mithras slaying the bull is lost, but on the left side a small part of the artificial grotto in black is preserved, though the dominant colour of the whole niche is dark red. The group itself was probably made of stucco, which is extremely rare in Mithraic sanctuaries.[1] All other figures in the niche are also made in stucco but in artistic quality they differ from one another greatly.



SEZIONE A~A

Fig. 5

On the upper part of the left side-wall of the niche (near *e*) the *quadriga* of Sol is represented (Pl. III). He is standing in the car and with his right hand upraised (the whip is missing), he is driving his four fierce horses up to heaven. On the right side-wall (*h*), but at a much lower level, is the corresponding figure of Luna standing in a chariot (Pl. IV). The goddess is clearly visible with bent left arm and outstretched right hand; her car is drawn by a single horse that, as in the precious picture of Luna in the Capuan Mithraeum,[2] seems to be looking back at his divine mistress.

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[1] See below p. 14.

[2] M. J. Vermaseren, *Mithriaca I. The Mithraeum at S. Maria Capua Vetere*, Leiden 1971, Pl. XI. *Cf.* Sen., *de Ovili* vs 3 (=PLM IV, 56) quoted by G. Gundel, *De stellarum appellatione et religione romana* (RGVV III, 2), Giessen 1907, 213 : *Astra subit niveis Phoebe subiecta iuvencis*; Lucan, *Phars.*, I, 78: *bigas.*

Some centimetres below Luna's horse is a very primitive figure of Cautopates wearing a Phrygian cap, tunic and cloak (Pl. V). He is standing crosslegged with his right hand under his chin while with his left hand he is probably holding his torch downwards. To the right of Cautopates, at the edge of the niche and on the front of the pilaster, it is possible to discern a figure kneeling with arms stretched out towards the right. The head has disappeared but the outlines of a Phrygian cap can still be seen. Possibly the person is part of a representation of the water miracle. Below Cautopates the whole side-wall of the niche has been painted to resemble a rock face.

On the right side of the niche the wall is coloured red and has no figures. On the left side however (*d*) there is a primitive representation of Cautes (Pl. VI). He is wearing a tiara and is standing straddle-legged (the right leg is lost); in his upraised right hand he holds a torch; his left arm and hand are not clearly distinguishable. At his right is a cock turned towards the left. From what we have said up to now it would seem that the Mithraeum at Ponza deserves its oblivion; it is not—as the Italians say—a "gran chè" compared with the many marvellous treasures the soil of Rome [1] offers to the museums every year. The figures belonging to the cult-niche are interesting only in that they were made in stucco. They are of low artistic quality; the only notable addition to the iconography of Mithraic art is a new example of the chariots of Sol and Luna, which are in general limited to Rome and its neighbourhood and belong to the second or third centuries A.D.[2] A second point of interest is that Cautopates is as usual represented below Luna (to the right side of the bull-slaying), but that Cautes, standing at Sol's side, is not represented below him but apart to one side of the niche. One should also note that Sol's chariot is in the upper part of the niche whereas Luna's one has been represented at a much lower level; thus means that the ascent of Sol in opposition to the descent Luna has been put in the foreground.

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[1] During my stay at Rome in April 1973 a new and interesting Mithraeum was discovered in the *Castra peregrinorum* under S. Stefano Rotondo; it will be published in this same Series by Mrs Lisa Lissi-Caronna. See E. della Riccia in *Il Tempo* 24.5.1973. This first notice has been kindly sent to me by Prof. Dr H. Schulte Nordholt, Director of the Netherlands Institute in Rome. See also *Antike Welt* 4, 1973, 55.

[2] See *CIMRM* I-II *s.v.* chariot; M. J. Vermaseren in *Hommages à Marcel Renard* III = *Latomus* 103, 1969, 643 ff with Pls CCXXX-CCXXXII and *Mithriaca* I, 14 ff.

However, the Mithraic sanctuary on the isle of Ponza deserves attention on account of the decoration of the vault before the niche. Here is represented also in stucco, but of a high artistic standard, a zodiac that is not only of interest to the specialist in Mithraic art but also to every student of the important science of astronomy and its so often disapproved but influential sister astrology.[1] One can even say that the heavens which are in Mithraism commonly symbolized by the vault itself—sometimes richly decorated with stars [2]—found their expression in this *speleum* in an exceptional zodiac, which must have been inspired by a *sacerdos dei Solis invicti Mithrae studiosus astrologiae* [3] who was at the same time *caelo devotus et astris.*[4]

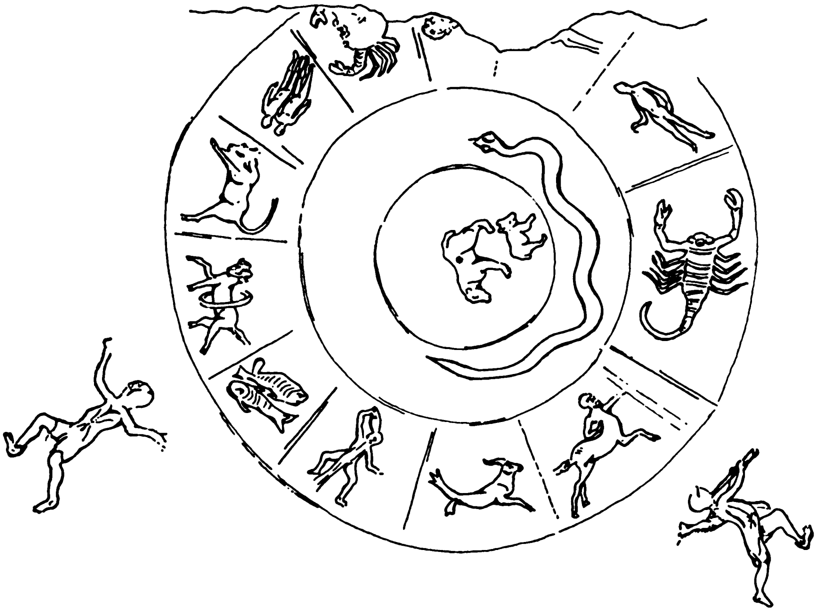

Fig. 6

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[1] Fr. Cumont, *Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans*, New York-London 1912; H. Gressmann, *Die hellenistische Gestirnreligion*, Leipzig 1925; Fr. Cumont, *L'Egypte des astrologues*, Bruxelles 1937.

[2] *CIMRM* I-II index *s.v.* star.

[3] CIL V 5893 (Mediolanum); Cumont, *MMM* II no 192; *CIMRM* I no 708.

[4] CIL VI 754 (Rome); *MMM* II no 13; *CIMRM* I no 406.

The zodiac is painted in yellow and has deteriorated somewhat towards the cult-niche, but it is in general extremely well preserved (Pl. VII and fig. 6). In its centre surrounded by a circle are the Great Bear = *Ursus Maior* facing towards the left and below him the Little Bear = *Ursus Minor* facing in the opposite direction (Pl. VIII). Inside a second and larger circle a coiled snake = *draco* is visible that entwines both Bears on the northern side and whose menacing head is turned towards the muzzle of the Little Bear. A third and still larger surrounding circle, which is itself divided into twelve sections, contains the signs. From the East opposite the snake's head we have clockwise :

1. Lion = *leo*; only his head is preserved.
2. *Virgo* : lost.
3. *Libra* : standing nude woman with balance (lost) in her outstretched right hand (Pl. IX).
4. Scorpion = *scorpio* (Pl. X).
5. Archer = *sagittarius* : Centaur, galloping towards the right. His arrow and bow are lost (Pl. XI).
6. Capricorn = *capricornus* (Pl. XII).
7. *Aquarius* : nude man striding towards the right and holding in his uplifted left hand a vessel; outstretched right arm (Pl. XIII).
8. Two Fishes = *pisces* facing in opposite directions (Pl. XIV).
9. Ram = *aries*, running towards the left and looking ahead (Pl. XV).
10. Bull = *taurus*, running towards the left (Pl. XVI).
11. Twins = *gemini*, two standing nude males embracing one another (Pl. XVII).
12. *Cancer*, facing towards the right (Pl. XVIII).

Outside the circle of the zodiac and the beginning of the vault there is on either side another figure. On the right side next to the side of the Centaur there is a male figure (Pl. XIX) running towards the right with outstretched arms. In his left hand he seems to be holding a long horn on which he is blowing. A similar figure but walking towards the left and without a horn preserved is represented on the left side next to the ram and fishes (Pl. XX). They may be interpreted as two wind gods.

Finally we should note that opposite the entrance and at the beginning of the left side-wall of the *speleum* the Christians have hewn a cross in the wall above a holy water font (Pl. XXI), a sign, according to Father Dies,[1] of the victorious struggle of Christ against Satan.

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[1] Dies, *o.c.*, 92. In connexion with the two windgods at Ponza three circular altars for Neptune, the Venti and Tranquillitas (CIL X 6642; 6643; 6644) found at Antium and dated in the first century A.D. are interesting. The Winds are represented as a figure of a youth with flying shouldercape and blowing a long twisted horn (Rome, Cap. Mus., Inv. no 1957 : Stuart Jones, *Mus. Cap.*, 327 Nr 23 A; 330 Nr 26 A; 331 Nr 27 A; W. Hermann, *Römische Götteraltäre*, Kallmünz 1961, 111 f Nr 43; R. Hampe, *Kult der Winde in Athen und Kreta* in *Sb. Heidelb. Ak.* (*Philos.-Hist. Kl. 1967, 1*), Heidelberg 1967, 23 n. 61 and Tafel VIII. For other Roman testimonia see L. Robert in *Hellenica* 9, 1950, 60. For the cult of the *Tempestates* : Cicero, *Nat. deor.*, II, 6; III, 51; of the Mistral : Sen., *Nat.*, V, 17, 5; Tert, *Nat.*, I, 10 and E. Bickermann in *Le Culte des souverains dans l'Empire romain* (*Entretiens Fondation Hardt XIX*), Vandœuvres-Genève 1973, 13 f. See also below p. 28 n. 1.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE MITHRAEUM

Since no inscriptions of identifiable brickwork have been preserved, one can only make suggestions about a possible date and the several conditions of the Mithraists who according to tradition[1] made their sanctuary here in natural cave. It is likely, but not at all certain, that the cult came to Ponza by way of one of the seaports nearby (Naples, Terracina, Antium or Ostia) and that it was introduced by merchants—possibly from the East—who had contact with the seaports of Africa, Egypt[2] and the Levant.[3] This seems more probable than that the followers of the "fellow in the cap"[4] at Ponza were seamen only, as

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[1] Porphyry, *Antro Nymph.*, 6 (p. 8 *ed.* Arethusa Monographs I, New York 1969). See also LeRoy A. Campbell, 6 ff; P. Boyancé, *L'antre dans les mystères de Dionysos* in *Rend. Pont. Acc. Arch.* 33, 1961, 107-127; especially 124 f; J. Daniélou, *Le symbole de la caverne chez Grégoire de Nysse* in *Mullus. Festschrift für Th. Klauser* 44-51, especially 45. See also W. Deonna, *Deux études de symbolisme religieux*, Bruxelles 1955, 33.

[2] F. M. Apollonj Ghetti, 54 mentions an Iseum near the port of Ventotene (*Pandataria*) and a head of Jupiter Ammon found at Punta di Eolo and now preserved in Naples, Museo Nazionale (*Cf.* L. Jacono, *Un porto duemillenario*, Roma 1933, 318-324).

[3] J. Rougé, *Recherches sur l'organisation du commerce maritime en Méditerranée sous l'Empire romain*, Paris 1966, 465 ff; G. A. Rost, *Vom Seewesen und Seehandel in der Antike*, Amsterdam 1968.

[4] This is the dreadful title of a book by Mrs Wynne-Tyson published in 1972. *The Times Literary Supplement* said of this work : "The argument of this book, showing that the facts about Mithras reveal the basic pattern of Western civilisation and throw light into many of the darker corners of history, points disturbing conclusions for Christian orthodoxy". But reading the astonishing lines "To the Christian and others outside the Mithraic fold, Mithraism, with its bull-slaying God who was also identifiable as the Bull, in whose regenerative blood the Faithful bathed; with its animal masks of Lion and Bull, Horse, Eagle and Gryphon, and its eschatological teachings of metempsychosis, evidenty seemed to be the worship of the Beast, even as Pure Christianity has always been the worship of the Perfect Man" etc., one would be tempted to think that Franz Cumont and his successors had all written in vain. I

Mithraism was not widely spread among them. [1] An approximate date is given only by the zodiac. The divisions between the various signs point in general to the third century A.D. [2] In the cult-niche there is no evidence of destruction by the Christians at the end of the fourth century, though it is likely that just as on the mainland the speleum was not used after that period. It is therefore not certain that the cross in the left wall is really antique and not of a much more recent date.

The main group in the cult-niche, which is now missing, must have been the usual one of Mithras as bull-slayer since on one side we have Sol in the quadriga and on the other Luna in her chariot which otherwise regularly figure on the marble reliefs.[3] There is only one major difference in that here Sol has been placed on a much higher level than Luna. It is possible that the artist intented clearly to underline that Sol had already risen from the night and that he thus symbolized the dawn.

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wonder what Stevie Smith in the *Observer* really meant when writing about this book "Most fascinating and apt to our times." Mithraism as the introduction to the anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner is preached by Alfred Schütze, *Mithras, Mysterien und Urchristentum*, Stuttgart 1972². The *petitio principii* already is wrong. The wildest opinions as well as unadulterated twaddle about the revealing excavations in the Mithraeum of Sa Prisca (M. J. Vermaseren - C. C. van Essen, *The Excavations in the Mithraeum of the Church of Santa Prisca in Rome*, Leiden 1965) can be found in the book by Father Geremia Sangiorgi O.S.A., *S. Prisca e il suo Mitreo* (Le Chiese di Roma illustrate 101), Roma 1968, which is now the official guide for visitors! It becomes each year more necessary for scholars to waste their precious time in refuting the many pseudo-scholars = anti-scholars : read, for example, the exemplary review by Theodor Klauser in *JAC* 11/12, 1968/1969, 215-224 who rightly emphasizes : "Wer die Wissenschaft wirklich fördern will, darf sich nicht damit begnügen, Einfälle und Lesefrüchte unkontrolliert zu einer verführerischen Synthese zu vereinigen und diese in gefälliger Form vorzutragen, die leiseste kritische Berührung bringt solche Konstruktionen zum Einsturz. Die bewährten Regeln der wissenschaftlichen Methode lassen sich nicht ungestraft ignorieren; auch der Begabteste kann langwierige Arbeitsprozesse, wenn sie nötig sind, nicht nach Belieben überspringen".

[1] Ch. G. Starr, *The Roman Imperial Navy 31 B.C. - A.D. 324*, Cambridge 1960²; D. Kienast, *Untersuchungen zu den Kriegsflotten der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Bonn 1966.

[2] This is suggested by H. G. Gundel in a letter of 28 July 1971 : "Sowohl die Steg-Trennung der einzelnen Bilder des Zodiakos als auch die gesamte Anlage scheinen mir in das 3. Jh. zu weisen". See now : H. G. Gundel - R. Böker in PWRE *s.v.* Zodiakos. Der Tierkreis in der antiken Literatur und Kunst (München 1972), X A, *cols* 461 ff; about the divisions that became usual in the second century A.D. see *col.* 702.

[3] See *CIMRM* I-II *s.v.* chariot.

We know from a graffito on the left side wall of the cult-niche in the Mithraeum of Sa Prisca on the Aventine that the first hours of the day especially, when the new light is born, are favourable for the rebirth of the initiate in the Mithras cult.[1] From the artistic point of view the representations of Sol and Luna find their closest parallels in a Mithraic relief from (?) Rome, and the fully-developed representation of Luna descending reminds one of the famous painting on the east wall of the Mithraeum at Capua.[2] The stucco groups in Ponza are however of a much lower artistic level than the relief and the painting there.

About the main group itself nothing is known with certainty. It must also have been in stucco like that in the Sa Prisca Mithraeum [3] and that in the recently discovered sanctuary under the floor of S. Stefano Rotondo. One may get an impression of the cult-niche by comparing the stucco group of the Palazzo Montecitorio,[4] now in the Liebighaus at Frankfort (Pl. XXII). Mithras' face, hair and left hand are gilt, as must have been the case in many other groups. The garments of the god and of the two torchbearers are red. Mithras' tunica is bordered with a green meander like the garments of the torchbearers at Capua.[5] But as we have already noted, the bull-slayer at Ponza must have been of poor artistic quality.

No special remarks are necessary about Cautes and Cautopates, who duly stand under Sol and Luna, since this symbolism is well-known;[6] more exceptional is a representation of the water miracle next to Cautopates on the border of the niche. This scene is not common in Italy,[7] though it is expressly mentioned in one of the lines of verse on the left wall in the Sa Prisca Mithraeum:[1]

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[1] Vermaseren-van Essen, *Excav. Sa Prisca*, 118ff : / *natus prima luce* / *duobus augg. cos.* / *Severo et Anton[ino]* / *XII k(alendas) D(ecem[bres])* / *dies Saturni* / *luna XVIII.*

[2] See above p. 7, n. 2.

[3] Vermaseren-van Essen, *Exc. Sa Prisca*, 129 ff.

[4] *CIMRM* I no 430 and fig. 119. I owe the colour photograph to Dr Ulrich Fischer.

[5] Vermaseren, *Mithriaca* I, 7 and Pls IV-V.

[6] The position of the torchbearers is according Porphyry, *De antro Nymph.*, 24 i.e. Cautes at the southern and Cautopates at the northern side. *Cf.* p. 27, n. 4.

[7] In Rome the scene occurs only in Mithraeum Barberini (*CIMRM* I no 390 and fig. 112, left 4 = Vermaseren, *De Mithrasdienst in Rome*, Nijmegen 1951, 117); outside Rome in the painting at Marino (Vermaseren in EAA *s.v.* Mithra; this Mithraeum will be studied in *Mithriaca* III).

Fons concluse petris qui geminos aluisti nectare fratres.

Still more exceptional however, and even unique in the iconography of Roman art, is the zodiac on the ceiling of the niche, which in the future will certainly be known as the Zodiac of Ponza. In Mithraic art [2] the zodiac occurs in representations of Mithras' rock-birth (Treves),[3] of Mithras' egg-birth (Modena),[4] of Aion (Arles) [5] and in connection with the scene of the bull slaying, where it is either represented on the vault of the grotto (Dura-Europos) [6] or even, as in London [7] and Siscia,[8] surrounds the scene. Here in Ponza the zodiac is like those in Dura and in the Barberini-Mithraeum closely connected with the killing of the bull; the zodiac replaces the heavenly vault but has been represented on the ceiling itself and decorates it. This is also known from other instances, varying in artistic and symbolic importance,[9] but the zodiac of Ponza is the first example known on the ceiling of a Mithraeum. Secondly, the zodiac has been executed in stucco (gypsum) which is exceptional in ancient art. It is therefore still more remarkable that the only other known example of a zodiac in stucco is also to be found in a Mithraic sanctuary.[1] The extensive temple of Mithras near Sa Prisca has off its left side three side-chapels, each of which has been divided by means of benches into another Mithraeum similar to the main chamber. The central (Y) of these three chapels has an aisle leading towards a raised podium which contains a terracotta vessel for lustration. A niche has been constructed against the rear wall (Pl. XXIII), which has been painted blue-green and which still shows clearly the circles of the zodiac. The signs were made in stucco and the traces of them that are still preserved indicate that they probably started with *Aries*, since on the left lower side the remains of the Scorpion are visible. In the centre of the zodiac there are still holes for attaching a stucco figure. The earlier suggestion that a head of Sol originally decorated the centre of this important niche, finds possible confirmation in a representation of a zodiac on a bronze incense burner found at Olbia [2] and preserved in the Museum at Odessa (Pl. XXIV). Here the bust of Sol in radiate crown and in the centre of the zodiacal ring is that of the kosmocrator and does not reflect the heliocentric theories of ancient astronomy.[3]

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[1] Vermaseren-van Essen, *Excav. Sa Prisca,* 193 ff, line 4.

[2] *CIMRM* I-II index *s.v.* zodiac.

[3] *CIMRM* I no 985 and fig. 237. See also H. P. L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World,* Oslo 1953, 33; 96 and fig. 14 who refers to Claudianus, *In I. Cons. Stilich.,* I, 63 : *Et vaga testatur volventem sidera Mithram.*

[4] *CIMRM* I no 695 and fig. 197; cf. *CIMRM* I no 860 and fig. 226 (Housesteads) = Eve and J. Harris, *The Oriental Cults in Roman Britain,* Leiden 1965, 34 and Pl. VIII. B. L. van der Waerden, *Die Anfänge der Astronomie,* Groningen 1965, 237 ff and figs 30-31.

[5] *CIMRM* I no 879 and fig. 227.

[6] *CIMRM* I no 40 and fig. 15.

[7] *CIMRM* I no 810 and fig. 218; Eve and J. Harris, 7 and Pl. II; R. G. Collingwood - R. P. Wright, *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain,* I, Oxford 1965, 2 no 3 and Pl. II who translates *factus Arausione* as "existed at Orange" and does not accept the interpretation of "initiated" into some Mithraic grade; R. Merrifield, *The Roman City of London,* London 1965, 179 and fig. 84; W. F. Grimes, *The Excavations of Roman and Mediaeval London,* London 1968, 100 and fig. 45; Joan Liversidge, *Britain in the Roman Empire,* London 1968, 449 ff with fig. 172.

[8] *CIMRM* II 1472 and fig. 375.

[9] On the ceiling of a circular building ("Rundbau") in Side : K. Lanckoronski, *Städte Pamphyliens und Pisidiens,* I, Wien 1890, 135 ff; in Palmyra : Fr. Cumont in Daremberg-Saglio, *Dict. Ant.* s.v. *zodiacus* col. 1048, who refers to H. Dawkins - R. Wood, *Les ruines de Palmyre,* Paris 1753, Pl. XIX A (temple of Bel) = *The Ruins of Palmyre,* London 1753; *cf.* Fr. Saxl - A. Beer, *The Zodiac of Quṣayr Amra* in K. A. C.

Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, I, 1932, 289-303; in Egypt : O. Neugebauer - R. A. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts*, III, 1969, 100 ff = H. G. Gundel - R. Böker in PWRE *s.v.* Zodiakos, *col.* 662 no 166, 4 (El Salâmûni); Fr. Boll, *Sphaera*, Leipzig 1903; reprint Hildesheim 1967, 159 ff (Denderah); for the astronomical ceiling described by Diodorus I, 49 see Anne Burton, *Diodorus Siculus Book I. A Commentary*, Leiden 1972, 154; for Septimius Severus, see below p. 32.

[1] E. Nash, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Rom*, II, Tübingen 1962, 84 fig. 774; Vermaseren-van Essen, *Exc. Sa Prisca*, 140 ff and Pl. XXXII, 1; H. G. Gundel-R. Böker in PWRE *s.v.* Zodiakos *col.* 661 no 166, 2.

[2] E. Belin de Ballu, *Olbia. Cité antique du littoral nord de la Mer Noire*, Leiden 1972, Pl. LXXVII, 2.

[3] B. L. van der Waerden, *Das heliozentrische System in der griechischen, persischen und indischen Astronomie* (*Neujahrsblatt herausgegeben von der naturforschenden Gesellschaft in Zürich*, 172), Zürich 1970. A marble torso in the Vatican belonging to a representation of Sol with a *balteus* decorated with the signs of the zodiac (Rapp in Roscher *s.v.* Helios *col.* 2002); the figure could also represent an Aion with whom he is akin (D. Levi, *Aion* in *Hesperia* XIII, 1944, 269-314). Sol in the centre in astronomical Codices : EAA *s.v.* zodiaco *col.* 1284.

In scholarship one cannot follow the hunter's advice, *ἄρκτου παρούσης ἴχνη μὴ ζήτει*, since the centre of the Ponza zodiac [1] shows both *ursae* (in Greek and Latin they are feminine) facing in opposite directions and partly surrounded by the *draco* of the next circle. Looking for similar representations, one finds a marble zodiac found in Egypt [2] and dating from the Roman imperial period. This marble plate, the so-called zodiac Daressy (now lost), is of similar construction to that at Ponza, i.e. it consists of three concentric circles and the various signs have been divided from each other. Yet there are some differences : in the centre instead of the bears we have the busts of Sol and Luna [3] partly surrounded by the snake within the same circle; in the second circle there are the Egyptian signs of the zodiac (dodekaoros) to which in the third and outer circle correspond the normal Graeco-Roman signs. These latter signs do not run clock-wise as in Ponza, but in the opposite direction; a further difference is that the signs of the Ponza zodiac are directed outwards and those of the Daressy sphaera inwards. This special arrangement at Ponza is however probably due to the fact that the signs being on the ceiling had to be observed from below. However the signs themselves are on both monuments closely related in their artistic conception (Ram - Centaur - Gemini).

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[1] Zodiac : Fr. Boll - W. Gundel in Roscher, VI *s.v.* Sternbilder *cols* 867-1071; A. Jeremias in Roscher IV *s.v.* Sterne *cols* 1427-1500; Fr. Cumont in Daremberg-Saglio *s.v.* Zodiacus *cols* 1046-1062; G. Thiele, *Antike Himmelsbilder*, Berlin 1898; Fr. Boll, *Sphaera. Neue griechische Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Sternbilder*, Leipzig 1903, reprint Hildesheim 1967; A. Bouché-Leclerq, *L'astrologie grecque*, Paris 1899, reprint Bruxelles 1963; B. L. van der Waerden, *History of the Zodiac* in *Archiv für Orientforschung* XVI, 1952-1953, 216-230; B. L. van der Waerden, *Die Anfänge der Astronomie*, Groningen 1965, 204 ff; H. G. Gundel in Enc. Arte Antica *s.v.* Zodiaco *cols* 1274-1286; H. G. Gundel - R. Böker in PWRE *s.v.* Zodiakos Bd X A *cols* 461-710.

[2] G. Daressy, *Notes et remarques CLXXXI* in *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes* 23, 1901, 126 f; Boll, *Sphaera*, 305 f and Pl. VI : "Das ganze Denkmal ist die exakteste Illustration zu Teukros"; Fr. Boll *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung* (aus Natur und Geisteswelt 638), Leipzig-Berlin 1919^2, 71 and fig. 11 = Fr. Boll - C. Bezold - W. Gundel, *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung*, Leipzig-Berlin 1926^3, fig. 26; A. Jeremias in Roscher, IV *s.v.* Sterne *col.* 1493 and fig. 54. About Teukros the Babylonian : W. Gundel-H. G. Gundel, *Astrologumena. Die astrologische Literatur in der Antike und ihre Geschichte*, Wiesbaden 1966, 112; *cf.* H. G. Gundel, *Weltbild und Astrologie in den griechischen Zauberpapyri* (Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte 53), München 1968, 4 n. 4. See Pl. XXV.

[3] A simplified version without the Egyptian elements but also with Sol and Luna in the centre is provided by the zodiac in the *Vaticanus graecus 1087* : Roscher, VI *col.* 935 fig. 13.

A second monument of importance in connection with the Ponza zodiac is the so-called planisphaerium or Tabula Bianchini (Pl. XXVI). This marble plate was discovered in several fragments in 1705 on the Aventine and was afterwards transported to the Louvre in Paris.[1] The Tabula is dated not earlier than the second century A.D. by Froehner, but is very possibly of the third century. Franz Boll has clearly demonstrated its relationship with the zodiac Daressy and thus the Egyptian origin of its conception. The Tabula however is much more extensive and shows five concentric circles; it has also a division in segments. In the innermost circle (Pl. XXVII) the two Bears are represented facing in opposite directions. The snake does not surround them both, but coils between them; [2] another difference from the Ponza zodiac is that the two Bears themselves are not standing but as it were leap forward. Around this North pole turn the other heavenly signs. The Dodekaoros follows in a second circle; in each of the two following circles a zodiac is represented, to which in the outmost circle correspond the thirty-six decans, i.e. three decans for each zodiacal sign. On the edge of the outermost circle the planets which are also the regents of the decans are visible.

Summarizing one may say that from the whole of Antiquity only two zodiacal monuments are preserved which show the sign of the North pole in the centre. Of these two the Tabula Bianchini is the most composite one, in that it also served for casting horoscopes; the stucco zodiac of Ponza decorated a Mithraeum and is unusual in that the two Bears have been represented alone in the inmost circle and it therefore shows the existence of an original tradition.[1] This becomes still more apparent if one studies the astronomical manuscripts [2] which in very limited number illustrate the theories of the "Himmelsbild" of the ancient authors and which are well-known from e.g. the Babylonian Teukros.[3]

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[1] W. Froehner, *Notice de la sculpture antique du Musée Impérial*, Paris 1869, 15 ff; Boll, *Sphaera*, 299 ff and Pl. V with the old bibliography; A. Merlin, *L'Aventin dans l'Antiquité*, Paris 1906, 449 no 14. Found in 1705 on the Aventine without any indication of the exact find spot. It seems likely to me that this interesting piece was found in the grounds of Sa Prisca. Now Paris, Louvre, Inv. no Ma 540; the photographs were kindly supplied by Prof. Noël Duval. For a fragment of a similar *tabula* see Daremberg—Saglio *s.v.* zodiacus, *col.* 1053 n. 3. See also Bouché—Leclercq, 227 f n. 3; Boll - Bezold - Gundel, *Sternglaube*, 60 and Pl. XV.

[2] For the *draco* between the two Bears (*δράκων ὁ διὰ μέσων τῶν Ἄρκτων* or *coluber inter ambos Septemtriones*), sometimes also called *serpens* or *anguis*, see Roscher *s.v.* Sternbilder *cols* 881 ff. In the Teukros-text : Boll, *Sphaera*, 96; in the text of Vergil, *Georg.*, I, 244 ff : P. d'Héronville, *L'astronomie de Virgile*, Paris 1940, 24.

The Greek tradition is found in the planisphaerium of *Vaticanus gr.* 1087, itself dating from the XVth century,[4] which shows the situation of the signs in the northern heavens. This sphaera consists of five concentric circles with the constellation of the two Bears moving in opposite directions in the centre. They are separated from each other by a large snake with raised head. Two other figures Cepheus and Cassiopeia are to be seen on the snake's tail - the former standing and the latter sitting. On another folio of the same codex (Pl. XXVIII) the two Bears are represented leaping in opposite directions separated by the snake.[5]

A second, Latin, manuscript [6] from the IXth century of importance for our subject is the *Codex Vossianus Lat, q^{to} 79* in Leiden (Pl. XXIX). This manuscript of 99 folios contains illustrations of various astronomical signs with an accompanying text consisting of Germanicus and Avienus. The original from which the Vossianus derives seems to go back to the fifth or even the fourth century A.D.[7] On folio 3 is a representation of the two *ursae.* Here, just as in the Tabula Bianchini, the bears are running in opposite directions and both are partly surrounded by a very large snake which at the same time separates them from each other.[8]

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[1] The *draco* however is similar to that of the zodiac Daressy which follows the Egyptian tradition (see p. 17, n. 2).

[2] G. Thiele, *Antike Himmelsbilder,* Berlin 1898.

[3] Boll, *Sphaera,* 158 f.

[4] Boll, *Sphaera,* 92 ff and Pl. I; Roscher *s.v.* Sternbilder *col.* 898 and fig. 4.

[5] Roscher *s.v.* Sternbilder *col.* 869 and fig. 1; A. Rehm, *Griechische Windrosen* in *Sb. Ak. Wiss. München, phil.-hist. Kl.* Abh. 3, 1916, 39 figs 3-4. The bears are represented on a scaraboid at Paris, dated to as early as the fifth or fourth century B.C. (Thiele, 29 fig. 6).

[6] Thiele, 77 ff; the bears : 91 and fig. 18. See also H. G. Gundel in EAA *s.v.* zodiaco *col.* 1284 and a colour plate. Though polar bears they are like those at Ponza, coloured brown.

[7] Thiele, 89.

[8] Compare also the zodiac in the Germanicus manuscript of about 1000 A.D. in Bern (Codex Bernensis 88 fol. 11^{v}). The Director of the Burgerbibliothek Dr Chr. v.

Thiele adduces still two other manuscripts. In *Codex Monte Casino* nro 3 of the XIth century with an astronomical essay of Bede's[1] is a detailed illustration of the Bears inside two loops of the snake (Fig. 7). This design has one feature in common with the Ponza zodiac in that the Bears are not running but are standing still. More akin to both the Tabula Bianchini and the Codex Vossianus is the *Codex Berol. Philippicus Lat.* 1830 fol. 11 of the IXth century in its representation of both *ursae*, since they are here running and entwined only by one loop of the snake.[2] Thiele's studies make it clear that those representations that show *ursa maior* also entwined in the snake's tail are not correct according to ancient astronomical theory.[3] According to Aratos vs 28-30 the true position of the Bears is facing in opposite directions with their backs turned towards each other[4] (*αἰεὶ δὲ κατωμάδιοι φορέονται, Ἔμπαλιν*

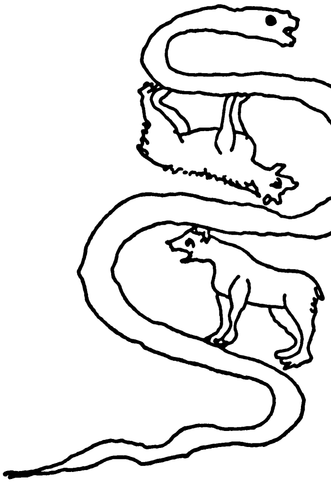

Fig. 7

Steiger was so kind as to send me photographs (Pls. XXX-XXXI). See H. G. Gundel in EAA *s.v.* zodiaco *col.* 1284 and 1286 with fig. 1417.

[1] Thiele, 161 and fig. 70. See fig. 7.

[2] Thiele, 164 and fig. 72.

[3] Thiele, 91.

[4] *Cf.* Roscher *s.v.* Sternbilder *col.* 871 : "Nach *Arat* wenden die Bärinnen stets das Haupt nach den Hüften voneinander und bewegen sich also rückwärts von Osten

εἰς ὤμους τετραμμέναι). The Codex Vossianus is incorrect in this respect as it shows the bears facing in opposite directions but with their paws turned towards each other. The *ursae* of Ponza are clearly to be distinguished as *maior* and *minor*. The *minor* is a real cub, which has been represented standing below her mother facing in the opposite direction but not with its back turned towards the *maior*'s.

The question arises as to why the bears (i.e. the North pole) have been represented on the ceiling of the Ponza Mithraeum. According to the Aratea of Germanicus [1] and the *scholia Germanici* [2] which reproduce the theories of Eudoxus and Aratos, the bears *figurantur aversis caudis invicem sibi adversantes*, which means that the animals are directed to the East and West and this is the exact position which they have in this Mithraeum, the niche being on the western side. As already stated the bears are generally running or leaping but not standing still as in Ponza. Yet there is a Hermetic text [3] about one of the Bears that explicitly mentions that the animal is in possession of the same energy as the world's axis : *ταύτης μὲν ἡ ἐνέργειά ἐστι καθάπερ ἄξονος, μηδαμοῦ μὲν δυνούσης μηδὲ ἀνατελλούσης, μενούσης δὲ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῳ, αὐτῆς περὶ <τὸ> αὐτὸ στρεφομένης, ἐνεργούσης δὲ τὴν ζωοφόρου κύκλου < ... >, παραδιδοῦσα τὸ πᾶν τοῦτο ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς νυκτὸς ἡμέρᾳ, ἀπὸ <δ'> ἡμέρας νυκτί*. The Bears remain on the same spot and impart movement

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nach Westen"; A. Schott - R. Böker, *Aratos, Sternbilder und Wetterzeichen*, Leipzig 1958. *Cf.* R. Böker, *Die Entstehung der Sternsphäre Arats* in *Sb. Ak. Leipz.* (*Mathem-naturwiss. Klasse* 99, 5), Leipzig 1952.

[1] Germanici Caesaris Aratea *ed.* A. Breysig, Berolini 1867, p. 2 :

28 *si melius dixisse feras, obversa refulgent*
29 *ora feris; caput alterius super horrida terga*
30 *alterius lucet; pronas rapit orbis in ipsos*
31 *declivis umeros.*

[2] P. 224 G *ed.* Breysig. *Cf.* Roscher *s.v.* Sternbilder *col.* 872.

[3] *Stob. Hermetica*, Exc. VI, 13 (I, 192, 24 ff *ed.* Wachsmuth; p. 412, 17 *ed.* Scott; III fr. VI, 13, p. 37 *ed.* Nock-Festugière). I quote the *Corpus Hermeticum* of Nock-Festugière, III *Fragments extraits de Stobée*, Paris 1954 (See also Roscher *s.v.* Sternbilder, *col.* 880). Wachsmuth supplies *<τοῦ> ζωοφόρου κύκλου <περιφοράν>*. Compare *Corpus Hermeticum*, Logos II, 7 (= I p. 34 *ed.* Nock-Festugière) : *τὰς γὰρ ἄρκτους ταύτας ἃς ὁρᾷς μήτε δυνούσας μήτε ἀνατελλούσας, περὶ δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ στρεφομένας, ἢ οἴει κινεῖσθαι ἢ ἑστάναι ;*

(*ἐνέργεια*) to the signs of the zodiac.[1] W. Gundel[2] has quoted in connexion with this interesting text the so-called Mithras liturgy,[3] in which as a result of the influence of Egyptian religion the most powerful god holds in his right hand as a weapon the constellation of the Bears who are here symbolized by the shoulder of a bull :*κατέχοντα τῇ δεξιᾷ χειρὶ μόσχου / ὦμον χρύσεον, ὅς ἐστιν Ἄρκτος ἡ κινοῦσα / καὶ ἀντιστρέφουσα τὸν οὐρανόν, κατά ὥραν / ἀναπολεύουσα καὶ καταπολεύουσα.* The constellation of the Bears thus emphasizes the power of the heavenly kosmocrator and demiurge, who in the so-called Mithras liturgy is no other than Mithras himself. The Ponza zodiac emphasizes the power of Mithras, who in the cult-niche was represented as a bull killer and who on other monuments clearly represents the kosmocrator and therefore, like the bears, figures in the centre of the zodiac or even holds the zodiac immediately after his birth. He can then be associated with eternal Time and with day and night in the form of Cautes and Cautopates. What is said in both texts about the constellation of the *Ursae*[4] might equally well apply to Mithras himself. Confirmation of this is to be found in an expression for which we have testimony in two Mithraea in Rome[5] and in London.[6] Here we find the words *ab oriente ad occidentem* which in the speleum of Sa Prisca, also dated to the third century A.D., are connected with the *Patres* of the community, who as members of the highest grade of initiates are under the protection (*tutela*) of the planet Saturn.[7] In this connection I think I have proved[8] that Saturn is to be identified with Mithras himself, who on earth through the *pater* is the commander-in-chief of the community. Saturn and Mithras differ from each other only in that they are two variant forms of the same god of Time: the old Saturn being replaced each year on 25th December by the new born child, who becomes himself Saturn in the course of a year. An everlasting revolution of time caused by the everlasting revolution of the heavenly stars.

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[1] About this conception : *Corpus Hermeticum* ed. Nock-Festugière, 41 n. 27.

[2] W. Gundel in Roscher *s.v.* Sternbilder *col.* 880 = *PGM* IV 693 ff = A. Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, Leipzig-Berlin 1923^3, reprint Darmstadt 1966, 14; 72. The conclusion of Dieterich that in the scene of investiture of Sol by Mithras the object in Mithras' hand is a bull's shoulder is incorrect (*Mithras, Geschichte eines Kultes,* Stuttgart 1965, 77 and figs 30; 43).

[3] Written at the beginning of the fourth century A.D. (Dieterich, 43).

[4] *Cf.* Suet., *Augustus*, 80 : *corpore traditur maculoso, dispersis per pectus atque alvum genetivis notis in modum et ordinem ac numerum stellarum caelestis ursae,* hence his destiny to become the ruler of the world.

[5] Vermaseren-van Essen, *Exc. Sa Prisca*, 179 ff.

[6] *CIMRM* II no 825; Eve-J. Harris, *Or. Cults Britain,* 13; W. F. Grimes, *Roman and Med. London,* fig. 52.

[7] W. Gundel in *PWRE* (Bd VII A) *s.v.* tutela *cols* 1603-1608.

[8] *The Miraculous Birth of Mithras* in *Studia G. van Hoorn,* Leiden 1951, 285 ff.

The ancient authors tell curious stories about bears and these are often confirmed by the observations of modern explorers.[1] More than a century ago J.J. Bachofen [2] in a remarkable monograph about the bear in the religion of antiquity drew attention to the large number of texts that refer to the belief that the bear's cub is given its form by the mother's licking it. The mother bear in this way gives form, or its characteristic shape to the cub. This corresponds to the German expression *ausbilden*, which at the same time has the meaning educate. The cubs are extremely small, Pliny [3] tells us, they are *candida informisque caro* : *hanc lambendo paulatim figurant*. And Ovid [4] repeats this popular tale in his own original way :

> *nec catulus, partu quem reddidit ursa recenti,*
> *sed male viva caro est* : *lambendo mater in artus*
> *fingit et in formam, quantum capit ipsa, reducit.*

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[1] R. Perry, *Bears*, London-New York 1970 who quotes the statement of John Capen Adams : "From all my experiences the convinction is pressed upon my mind that the grizzly-bear possesses a nature which, if taken in time and carefully improved, may be made the perfection of animal goodness."

[2] J. J. Bachofen, *Der Bär in den Religionen des Altertums*, Basel 1863 which is still the only monograph on the subject.

[3] Pliny, *NH*, VIII, 126 (= LIV (36) = p. 67 *ed.* A. Ernout); *cf.* Pliny, *NH*, X, 176 (= LXIII (83) = p. 88 *ed.* E. de Saint Denis) where he tells the same story also about lionesses and female wolves : *postea lambendo calefaciunt fetus omnia ea et figurant.* The principal source for Pliny is Aristotle, *HA*, VI, 30 and VIII, 17. That a cub is *paulo muribus maior* is rightly observed *cf.* L. J. de Jong in *Artis* 5, 1959, 8 : "niet veel groter dan een rat"; the pregnancy of the mother is however much longer than the thirty days mentioned by Pliny (R. Perry, 57; about seven months for lip-bears : H. P. Rensendijk in *Artis* 18, 1972, 45).

[4] Ovid., *Met.*, XV, 379-381.

Ovid [1] had already used similar expressions in his description oef th creation of Man, who was formed from the earth by Prometheus :

vs 82 *Quam satus Iapeto, mixtam pluvialibus undis.*
83 *finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum.*
87 *Sic, modo quae fuerat rudis et sine imagine, tellus*
88 *induit ignotas hominum conversa figuras.*

The mother bear thus shows that she possesses creative power, since she knows how to give form to the cub. In Ovid the story occurs in his exposition of the doctrine of Pythagoras; Pythagorean influence is also present in the verses about Prometheus. It can not be a mere accident, that it is Pythagoras, who according to the Neoplatonist Porphyry [2] calls the female bears the hands of Rhea (*τὰς ἄρκτους Ῥέας χεῖρας*). The great Mother-goddess herself, the Earth-Mother, formed with her hands all that was born : in every aspect she represents the creative power of Nature, and in her work she is helped by the bears. These are therefore found together with the goddess, who is in some places associated with Artemis and in Asia Minor with Cybele. Both these goddesses are mistresses of the animals and especially of wild beasts such as panthers, lions and bears. Each of the animals has a particular power when in the service of the goddess. Rhea-Cybele is nearly always accompanied by the lions but the tradition of her connection with the bear, which is certainly very old, has been preserved in Apuleius' Metamorphoses [3] as well as on a marble frieze found in the Metroon at Ostia [4] and dated to the second century A. D. Artemis,[1] who is normally connected with the deer, is found associated with the bear at Brauron in Attica,[2] where during the feast of the goddess young maidens, called "bears" like the priestesses, performed a dance (*ἀρκτεία*). The girls were between five and ten years old and wore a saffron robe, possibly "in order to imitate the tawny skin of the bear". This feast was celebrated every five years, and during it the young "bears" were consacrated to the goddess. The conclusion is that in the story of the mother bear and her connection with the fertility goddesses we can see the secret force of creation, which as already noted is also to be connected with the creator Mithras.

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[1] Ovid, *Met.*, I, 76-88.

[2] Porphyry, *Vita Pyth.*, 41 (p. 30 *ed.* Nauck) : *ἔλεγε δέ τινα καὶ μυστικῷ τρόπῳ συμβολικῶς, ἃ δὴ ἐπὶ πλέον Ἀριστοτέλης ἀνέγραψεν. οἷον ὅτι τὴν θάλατταν μὲν ἐκάλει εἶναι δάκρυον, τὰς δ' ἄρκτους Ῥέας χεῖρας, τὴν δὲ πλειάδα Μουσῶν λύραν, τοὺς δὲ πλανήτας κύνας τῆς Φερσεφόνης.* See also R. Eisler in *Philologus* 1909, 181.

[3] Apuleius, *Met.*, XI, 8 (p. 145 *ed.* D. S. Robertson - P. Vallette) : *vidi et ursam mansuem <quae> cultu matronali sella vehebatur* (in the Isiac procession, where the she-bear represents Cybele and the ape Attis!).

[4] Ostia, Antiquarium, Inv. no 162, Sala II, 43. Raïssa Calza in *Mem. Pont. Acc.* (S. III) 1946, 214 no 6 and fig. 15; Raïssa Calza-Maria Floriani Squarciapino, *Museo Ostiense*, Roma 1962, 29 no 43. The group of animals consists of a lion, deer, panther, she-bear and lion and was dedicated by C. Cartilius Euplus to Attis at the instigation of the goddess.

Various other authors connect the Bears with light. Varro states[3] that the word *ursus* is of Lucanian origin, but that the Romans call them so from their waring. What he means becomes clear from the poet Lucan[4] who alludes to the connection with *lux* speaking about the northern peoples, who do not at all fear death but believe that they return to the light (i.e. of the bears). Seneca[5] too mentions that the Arcadian bears call forth the light, which in Manilius[6] is referred to as the *prima lux*. In the description of the cult-niche at Ponza it was said that the chariot of Sol had already risen and the Moon goddess was descending. Sol therefore figures on a higher level than Luna. It is not impossible that the dawn is symbolized here and that the Bears are also intended to stress this aspect. In Sa Prisca a member of the community has recorded his initiation in a graffito with the words *natus prima luce.*[1] As Bachofen [2] noted, "auf der kosmischen Bedeutung der lichtgebärenden Arktos erbaut sich nun die mystische Idee der Wiedergeburt des erstorbenen Lebens, die in *Sol quotidie renatus* ihr uranisches Vorbild hat". It is a pity that we do not have any certain indication, that the Bears in Ponza had such a symbolic meaning also.

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[1] K. Glaser, *Artemis und die Bären* in *Mitt. Vereins für Klass. Philologie*, VII, Wien 1930, 55 ff; K. Hoenn, *Artemis, Gestaltwandel einer Göttin*, Zürich 1946 gives no new aspects.

[2] Aristophanes, *Lys.*, 645; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* II, Oxford 1896, 436 ff, 564. For new finds Lilly Kahil in *Antike Kunst* 1965, 20 ff; Nilsson, *Gr. R.* I, 456; U. Pestalozza, *Religione Mediterranea*, Milano 1951, 236 ff; A. Brelich, *Paides e Parthenoi*, Roma 1969, 229 ff, especially 240 ff.

[3] Varro, *LL*, V, 100 (p. 96 *ed.* R. G. Kent) : *ursi Lucana origo vel, unde illi, nostri ab ipsius voce.*

[4] Lucanus, *Phars.*, I, 458 ff (I, p. 21 *ed.* A. Bourgery) :

Certe populi quos despicit Arctus
Felices errore suo, quos ille timorum
Maximus haut urguet leti metus. Inde ruendi
In ferrum mens prona viris animaeque capaces
Mortis, et ignavum rediturae parcere vitae.

[5] Seneca, *Herc. fur.*, 129 : *Arcades ursae lucem verso temone vocant.*

[6] Manilius, *Astr.*, V, 696 : *qui cum prima luce resurgit. Cf.* Suidas *s.v. ἄρκτος : ἀρκτῷος ὁ ἀνατολικός*. A Dutch translation of Manilius with good drawings and a map : J. van Wageningen, *M. Manilii Astronomica*, Leiden 1914.

The exact positioning of the Bears and various other features show that the *pater* of this community was *studiosus astrologiae* [3] or, as a poem of the Byzantine Johannes Kamateros tells us [4] about Rhetorios (5th century A.D.) *σοφός τις ἐκ τῶν παλαιῶν, ῥήτωρ πεπυκνωμένος, Ῥητόριος Αἰγύπτιος, οὕτως ὠνομασμένος πρὸς ἐπιστήμην, ἔμπειρος τῆς των ἄστρων πορείας.*

One gets the same impression from the study of the signs of the zodiac. They do not differ greatly from the usual representations of these signs.[5] This means that the artist has followed well the instructions of an *astronomus.* The zodiac at Ponza is orientated correctly with the Ram near the north-side and with the Scorpion on its southern side. The Scorpion has been depicted larger than normal in an extensive segment. The ram with its head turned back springs through a ring, which symbolizes the equinoctial colure. This feature also occurs in many other representations of which a beautiful example [6] in a Codex Vossianus (Pl. XXXII). It is remarkable, however, that the ram is to be found turned towards the west, and that the following signs up to the scorpion face in the same direction. The remaining signs face in the opposite direction, but all twelve signs are turned outwards from the centre. This means that in the sequence of the signs *aries*, the sign that announces the spring is thought of as being the principal and first. One may thus adduce here line 13 of a verse of about 200 A.D. painted on the left wall of the Sa Prisca Mithraeum on the Aventine :

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[1] See above p. 14. In comparison with Sa Prisca a graffito at Pompeii (CIL IV 8820) might be mentioned : *X kalendas Febr(u)a(rias)/ursa peperit diem/Iovis* (W. Krenkel, *Pompejanische Inschriften*, Heidelberg 1962, 61 with fig.).

[2] Bachofen, *Bär*, 20.

[3] See above p. 9.

[4] Boll, *Sphaera*, 12.

[5] Compare the description in the above (p. 17, n. 1) mentioned articles.

[6] Thiele, 108 fig. 33. The same position of the ram on a marble zodiac (third cent. A.D.) from Utica (M. Yacoub, *Le musée du Bardo*, Tunis 1970, 27 and fig. 30; Inv. no 3501).

> *Primus et hic aries astrictius ordine currit*
>
> "And here as the first the ram runs exactly on his course".

When I published this interesting text I suggested [1] that this line had been inspired by Odyssey IX, 447 ff, but H. D. Betz [2] has convincingly shown that here the sign of the zodiac is meant. *Aries* is indeed *dux*, the *principium signorum*, the *primus* of the zodiacal signs in Mithraism also. Since *aries* is the leader he must have to do with the other celestial leader Mithras and his terrestrial representative the *Pater*. W. Gundel [3] had already suspected this connection on the basis of the important text in Porphyry [4] which begins : *τῷ μὲν οὖν Μίθρᾳ οἰκείαν καθέδραν τὴν κατὰ τὰς ἰσημερίας ὑπέταξαν · διὸ κριοῦ μὲν φέρει Ἀρηίου ζῳδίου τὴν μάχαιραν ἐποχεῖται δὲ ταύρῳ, Ἀφροδίτης δὲ καὶ ὁ ταῦρος.* In this Neoplatonic interpretation Mithras bears the sword of *aries*, which according to other authors is the *domicilium* of Mars. This would mean that Mithras slays the bull with the sword of *aries* or with the sign of Mars. Of these speculations the archaeological finds confirm only that the sign of Mars protects[1] the grade-bearer *Miles*: the soldier in this way demonstrates his own particular relation with Mithras himself, and must therefore, like the *pater*, also have connections with *aries*. In a similar way the next sign *taurus* is the *domicilium* of the planet Venus, who is protectress (*tutela*) of the *nymphus* and the period of Venus' domicile in *taurus* is represented by Mithras riding the bull. Hence there is a relationship between Mithras-Aphrodite and *pater-nymphus*. The text of Porphyry goes on to speak about Mithras as the creator and lord of *genesis* with Cautes at his left = south side and with Cautopates at his north = right side because of the coldness of the north wind (*διὰ τὸ ψυχρὸν τοῦ ἀνέμου*). And the Neoplatonist explains : *ψυχαῖς δ' εἰς γένεσιν ἰούσαις καὶ ἀπὸ γενέσεως χωριζομέναις εἰκότως ἔταξαν ἀνέμους διὰ τὸ ἐφέλκεσθαι καὶ αὐτὰς πνεῦμα, ὥς τινες ᾠήθησαν, καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν ἔχειν τοιαύτην. ἀλλὰ βορέας μὲν οἰκεῖος εἰς γένεσιν ἰούσαις · ἡ δὲ τοῦ νότου διαλύει.* According to this theory the north wind is the appropriate wind for souls proceeding to birth, while the breath of the south wind puts an end to it. The philosophical explanation of Mithras is reproduced by the artist in Ponza in a remarkable way. In the centre of the niche we have Mithras as bullslayer with Cautes on his left = south and Cautopates on his right = north. Sol is also represented on the south side rising above the horizon; Luna, on the other hand, is descending on the north side where Cautopates symbolizes the dark element, night, the realm of death. Finally, there are in Ponza the two Wind gods Notos (South) and Boreas (North) of which the former seems to have wings or a shouldercape only.[2] Now it is clear why not four but only two winds are represented here : the whole decoration of the Ponza Mithraeum illustrates the symbolism relative to the god himself, in whose honour his followers met in this cave on the isle that was so similar to that cave of the nymphs in the Odyssey about which Porphyry wrote at Rome. And now it is interesting to reconsider [1] the Mithraeum in London (Pl. XXXIII). The same combination as in Ponza, Sol ascending-Luna descending, in harmony with Cautes (left) and Cautopates (right), both standing next to Mithras as bullslayer, who is surrounded by the zodiac. The winds however are not quite the same. In the sanctuary at Ponza the north is on Cautopates' side and this is contrary to the Porphyry's symbolism. In this respect the London relief is more accurate : on the side of *genesis*, symbolized by the rising Sol in his quadriga and by the figure of Cautes, the bust of Boreas, recognizable by his beard and the wings at his temples, is present; whereas the youthful Notos (South) is represented as the dissolving wind on Luna's and Cautopates' side. A long—discussed problem is the inscription [2] on the London-relief: *Ulpi/us / Silva/nus* (below Sol) *emeri/tus leg(ionis) / II aug(ustae) / votum solvit* (below Luna). Next to Boreas and at his right side : *fac/tus*; at Notos' left side : *Arau/sione*. Mommsen [3] interpreted *factus* as "made a veteran" but, as Collingwood-Wright observed, the usual word would have been *missus* and moreover the word has been engraved at a distance from *emeritus* next to Boreas' head. Collingwood-Wright translate "enlisted at Orange" and remark "it seems best to regard the action here recorded as the original recruitment of Ulpius Silvanus, which may well have occurred at Arausio, the Second Legion colony". They reject also the interpretation once proposed by F. Haverfield [4] of "initiated" into some Mithraic grade since the grade is not mentioned. Considering the deeper symbolism of the relief it is probable that *factus* explicitly put next to the North wind has the meaning of "came into existence- was born at Arausio", [5] the latter name being put next to Notos for reasons of balance and not necessarily with reference to the south. Was the dedicator Silvanus recalling his first hours of existence? As we have seen [1] this was not the case with the expression *natus prima luce* in the Sa Prisca graffito, where *natus* without indicating the exact grade clearly has the meaning of (*re-*) *born* = *initiated.* Yet, *natus* and *factus* are expressly distinguished in an inscription on an altar erected at Cologne [2] in honour of the *dea* Semele and her divine sisters by Reginia Paterna in honour of the sacred maternity, being herself a mother by birth and by confirmation (*mater nata et facta*). This altar (Pl. XXXIV) decorated with thyrsus and cymbals (right side) and a *pedum* with tympanum (left side) refers to the cults of Dionysus and Cybele and was dedicated when Seranius Catullus was *pater* [3] of the Mithraic community. Various divinities are honoured here and various influences are therefore to be expected. It seems that the term *facta* could be derived from Mithraism; in any case it is here stated that Reginia Paterna who by birth was already a future hereditary mother of the community now commemorates the fact that she really became a mother by confirmation and installation.[4] The Mithraic *patres* no longer had

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[1] Vermaseren-van Essen, *Exc. Sa Prisca*, 213 ff.

[2] H. Betz in *Novum Testamentum*, X, 1968, 74 ff.

[3] W. Gundel in PWRE (Bd. XI, 2) *s.v.* Krios *cols* 1869 ff.

[4] Porphyry, *De antro Nymph.*, 24 f. Porphyry wrote this treatise at Rome (J. Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, Gent 1913, reprint Hildesheim 1964, 109; R. Beutler in PWRE (Bd XXII, 1) *s.v.* Porphyrios *col.* 279 f). I follow the text and translation in the Arethusa Monographs, I, New York 1969. See also LeRoy A. Campbell, *Mithraic Iconography and Ideology*, Leiden 1968, 54 ff; 286; in general : J. Pépin, *Porphyre, exégète d'Homère* in *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique de la Fondation Hardt* XII, Vandœuvres-Genève 1965, 231-266. See also M. A. Elferink, *La descente dc l'âme d'après Macrobe*, Leiden 1968. Porphyry (*De antro Nymph.*, 3) explicitly states that the allegorical sense of the grotto must be clear not only to scholars but also to the common people (*ἔκδηλον εἶναι οὐ τοῖς σοφοῖς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἰδιώταις ἀλληγορεῖν τι καὶ αἰνίττεσθαι διὰ τούτων τὸν ποιητήν*); *cf.* Pépin, 261 ff; for a French translation and commentary : F. Buffière, *Les Mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque*, Paris 1956, 419 ff; 597 ff; about Porphyrius' sources Numenius and Cronius : Buffière, 423. E. des Places in his recent edition (1973) of Numenius' fragments (fr. 60 p. 101 = *De antro Nymph.*, 5-6) even goes so far as to say that the whole of Porphyry's book could derive from Numenius.

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[1] Vermaseren-van Essen, *Exc. Sa Prisca* 157; 169 (note the epithet *acer*). For Mars : H. G. Gundel in PWRE (Bd XXIV) *s.v.* Pyroeis *cols* 56-75, especially *col.* 68. *Cf.* Macrobius, *Sat.*, I, 12, 10 : *cum primum signum Aries Marti adsignatus sit, sequens mox Venerem, id est Taurus, accepit.*

[2] *Cf.* Steuding in Roscher *s.v.* Windgötter *cols* 511-517; *CIMRM* II no 1685 and figs 431-434 (Carnuntum); M. L. Krüger, *CSIR, Österreich I, 3. Die Reliefs des Stadtgebietes von Carnuntum, I. Die figürlichen Reliefs*, Wien 1970, 19 f no 181 with Pls (date : second-third century A.D.). In general see also : R. Hampe, *Kult der Winde in Athen und Kreta* in *Sb. Heidelb. Ak. Wiss.* (phil.-hist. Kl. 1967, 1), Heidelberg 1967. For the symbolism of Boreas and Notos, see Buffière, 453, who concerning Boreas concludes :"Homère tient Borée pour un principe de fécondité. Nul ne convient mieux pour escorter les âmes sur les chemins de la génération." See also above p. 11 n. 1.

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[1] See above p. 15, n. 6.

[2] Collingwood-Wright, *RIB*, 1 f no. 3.

[3] *Eph. Ep.* VII, 816; *cf.* Cumont, *MMM* II 160 no. 471; Vermaseren, *CIMRM* I 284 no. 811.

[4] F. Haverfield, *On two Marble Sculptures and a Mithraic Relief of the Roman Period found in London* in *Archaeologia* LX, 1906, 43 ff.

[5] It is generally accepted that Arausio = Orange, but see the remark of Eve and John Harris, 8 n. 3.

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[1] See above p. 14.

[2] CIL XIII 8244; Cumont, *MMM* II 476 no 574 b; *CIMRM* II 52 no. 1027 (read : Reginia Fraterna); Fr. Fremersdorf, *Die Denkmäler des römischen Köln*, II, *Urkunden zur Kölner Stadtgeschichte aus römischer Zeit*, Köln 1950, Pl. 37; Fr. Fremersdorf, *Inschriften und Bildwerke aus römischer Zeit*, Köln 1956, 7 no. 356; H. Schoppa, *Römische Gotterdenkmäler in Köln*, Köln 1959, 68 no. 100 and Pl. 82; *Römer am Rhein*, Köln 1967, 167 no. A 115. Date : about 200 A.D. Found in 1674 during the construction of the convent of the Ursulines in the Machabäerstrasse, and so by change there is now a mother superior instead of Reginia Paterna the *mater nata et facta*! For Iustine Paterna who dedicated a Mithras inscription at Rheder : *CIMRM* II no. 1034; a Catellus is known from Rome : *CIMRM* I no. 566.

[3] For the difficult phrase *πατὴρ σπηλλέου* in an inscription from Thessalonike see *CIMRM* II 382 no. 2345. For a dionysiac interpretation see D. M. Pippidi, *Grottes dionysiaques à Callatis* in *BCH* LXXXVIII, 1964, 151-158, especially 156, who however does not mention the inscription at Cologne.

[4] Fr. Fremersdorf translates "*Mutter durch Geburt und Wahl*". A good parallel is IG XII 8, 81 = Ch. Picard - A. J. Reinach in *BCH* XXXVI, 1912, 315 = L. Vidman, *SIRIS*, 136 no. 264 from Imbrus and dedicated to Isis by a *Φλαουία Νείκωνος [τ]οῦ Κήδ[ωνος ?, ἱέρεια γενομέ]|νη τὸ β'*. E. Demougeot in *Studi in onore di A. Calderini e R. Paribeni*, I, Milano 1956, 339 refers to Iulia Florentina *pagana nata, fidelis facta* on an inscription from Catania.

the sacred hereditary tradition of their forerunners the Magi;[1] *factus Arausione* in the London inscription may therefore signify "appointed", "confirmed" without indicating the grade, though Silvanus must have been a *pater* with a good knowledge [2] of astrological symbolism. Eve and John Harris are of the opinion [3] that the relief of London "although apparently executed in Italian marble, is clearly of provincial workmanship". They follow here the opinion of Jocelyn M. C. Toynbee [4] to whom it even "seems most likely that an unworked piece was imported into Britain and was carved in this country either by a Briton or by a Gaul or perhaps, in view of its compositional associations, by a Danubian, who was plying his trade as sculptor in the British province." The theory of Danubian fabrication is based on the discovery of a small relief of the Danubian horsemen in the Mithraeum at London and secondly on the relief from Siscia in Pannonia Superior.[5] The find of the relief with the two horsemen proves the existence of their worship in this Mithraeum by Danubian followers of the oriental Mithras, but does not necessarily prove that all the faithful therefore came from eastern Europe and that one of them was a sculptor who carved the relief. The relief from Siscia has only the zodiac surrounding the bullslayer in common with that in London.[6] But after the discovery of the Ponza Mithraeum with such close relations with the London relief, the Danubian influence becomes uncertain. The theory of a British or Gaulish sculptor who carved the London relief was introduced because the dedicator has been at Orange. Is it not much more simple to suppose an Italian or a Roman sculptor to whom Silvanus personally[1] gave his order? Fr. Cumont already remarked[2] about the remarkable finds at London "ces sculptures sont d'un fort bon travail, et il est probable, vu surtout la pierre dont elles sont faites, qu'elles proviennent de Gaule ou d'Italie et ont été importées par la Tamise." I prefer a Roman workshop or sculptor to a Gaulish one because of the symbolism of the relief, which, with its philosophic ideas, points to the great centre of the Imperium; and the later finds at London with their large sculptures and the slab inscribed with the *ab oriente ad occidentem* formula[3] show clear connections with Rome and especially with the large Mithraeum of Sa Prisca on the Aventine.[4] The period of the third and fourth centuries were not only favourable for the Mithraic faith but astrological theories and speculations became wide-spread.[5] It was the period of Septimius Severus who built a septizonium[6] and had the ceiling of the room of justice in his palace decorated with the horoscope of his birth-day.[7] These stars did not however allude to his destiny as an initiate or *Pater* in Mithraism but to his title as *pater patriae*. The orient had conquered the western world and was soon to divide it.[8]

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[1] Fr. Cumont, *Die Mysterien des Mithra*, Leipzig-Berlin 1923³, 25; A. J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* I, Paris 1944, 332 ff. For the sun-priests and the *magi* in the third cent. A.D. see J. Gagé, "*Basiléia*", Paris 1968, 319 ff, who, however, does not know the hymns of Sa Prisca in their new edition; J. Gagé, *Le paganisme impérial à la recherche d'une théologie vers le milieu du III^e siècle* in *Abh. Ak. Wiss. Mainz (Geistes- und Sozialwiss. Klasse 1972 N.R. 12)*, Mainz 1972, 587-604.

[2] For the Porphyry's statement see above p. 27, n. 4. For the understanding of symbolism in the army : H. Seyrig in *Syria* X, 1929, 326; P. Merlat, *Jupiter Dolichenus*, Paris 1960, 114.

[3] Eve and John Harris, 8; M. J. T. Lewis, *Temples in Roman Britain*, London 1966, 99-107 gives a brief survey without anything new.

[4] J. M. C. Toynbee, *Art in Roman Britain*, London 1962, 153 f and Pl. 73. London, Kensington Palace. Late-second or third century A.D., i.e. the period of Septimius Severus.

[5] Cumont, *MMM* II 325 no 220 and fig. 152; *CIMRM* II 172 no 1472 and fig. 375.

[6] The relief is filled with the scenes of Mithras carrying and riding the bull on the left side and with the rock-birth and Oceanus on the right side.

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[1] This does not necessarily mean that Silvanus himself was at Rome.

[2] *MMM* II 389 no 267.

[3] London : Collingwood-Wright, 2 no 4 who dates May 307-May 308, a century later than the dipinto in Sa Prisca (Vermaseren-van Essen, 155 f) on the upper layer of paintings on the right wall, and therefore still visible till the end of the fourth century.

[4] In both Mithraea of London and Rome the common finds of a Serapis, Dionysiac influences, large group of Mithras tauroctone.

[5] See H. von Gall, *Bemerkungen zum Bogen des Dativius Victor in Mainz* in *Jahrbuch Zentralmuseums Mainz* 15, 1968, 98-119. The arch dates from the first half of the third century A.D.

[6] *Septizonium* : Nash, *Bildlexikon* II, 302 ff with bibliography.

[7] Sv. Eriksson, *Wochentagsgötter, Mond und Tierkreis* (Studia graeca et latina Gothoburgensia III), Stockholm 1956, 96 ff; F. H. Cramer, *Astrology in Roman Law,* 211 ff; J. Guey, *La date de la naissance de Septime-Sévère d'après son horoscope* in *BSAF* 1956, 33-35.

[8] E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety,* Cambridge 1965, 102 ff.

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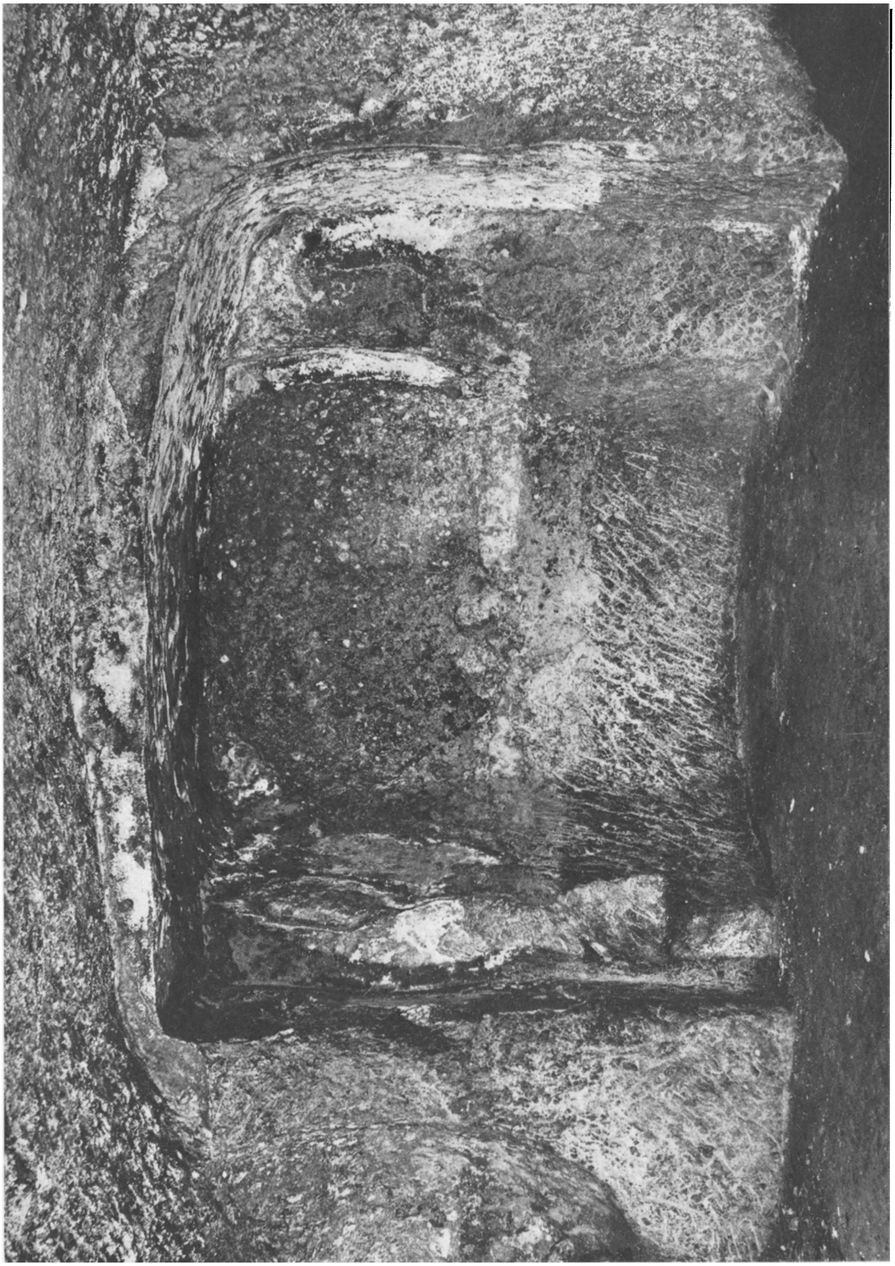

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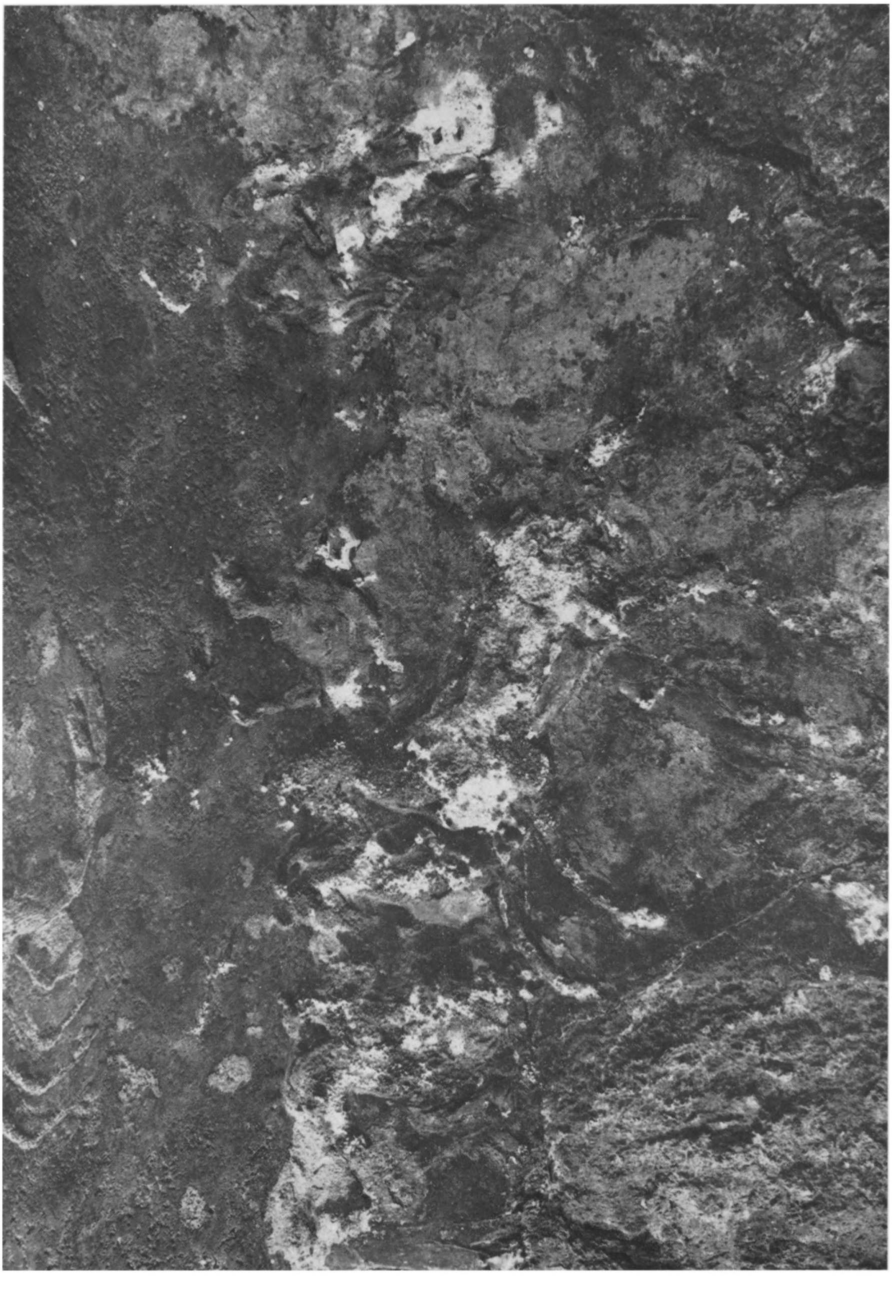

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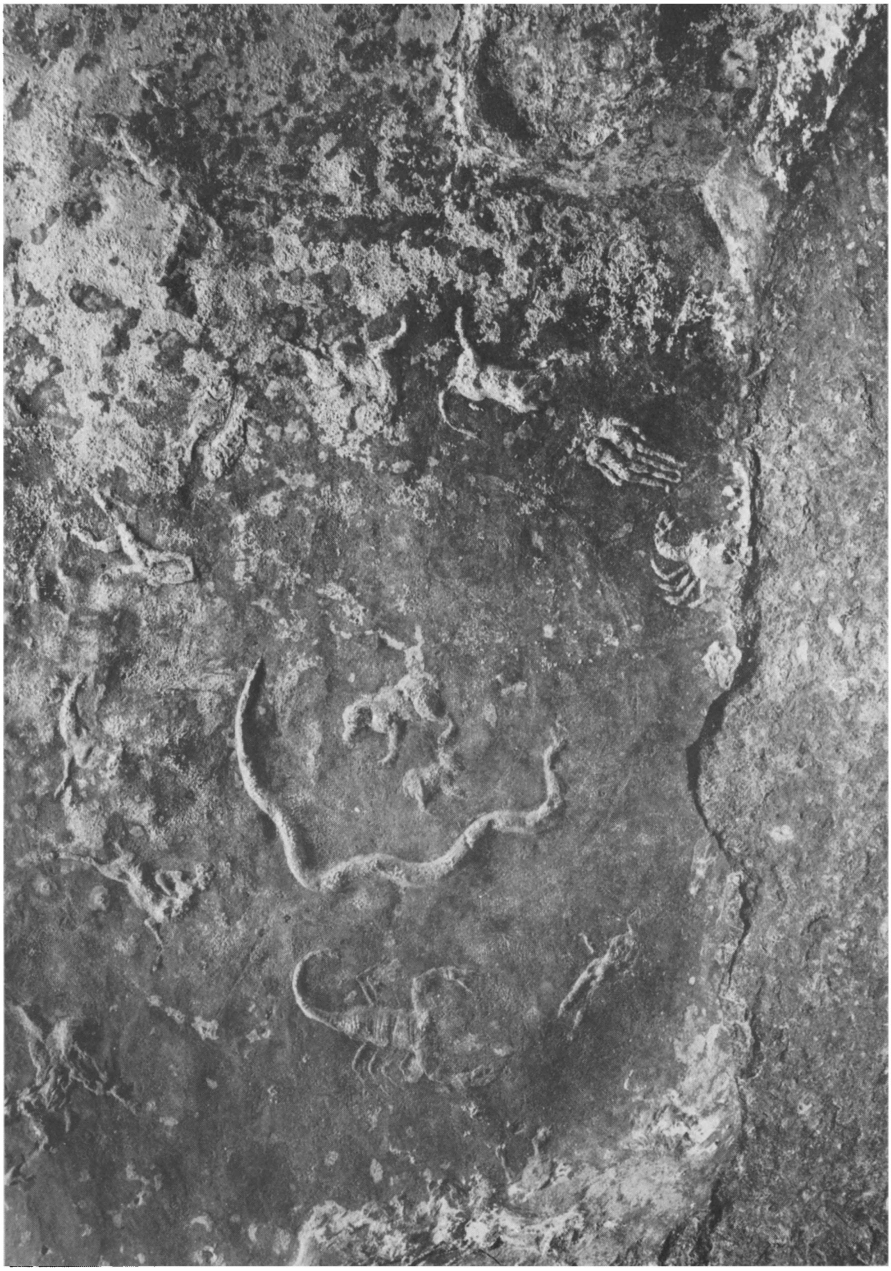

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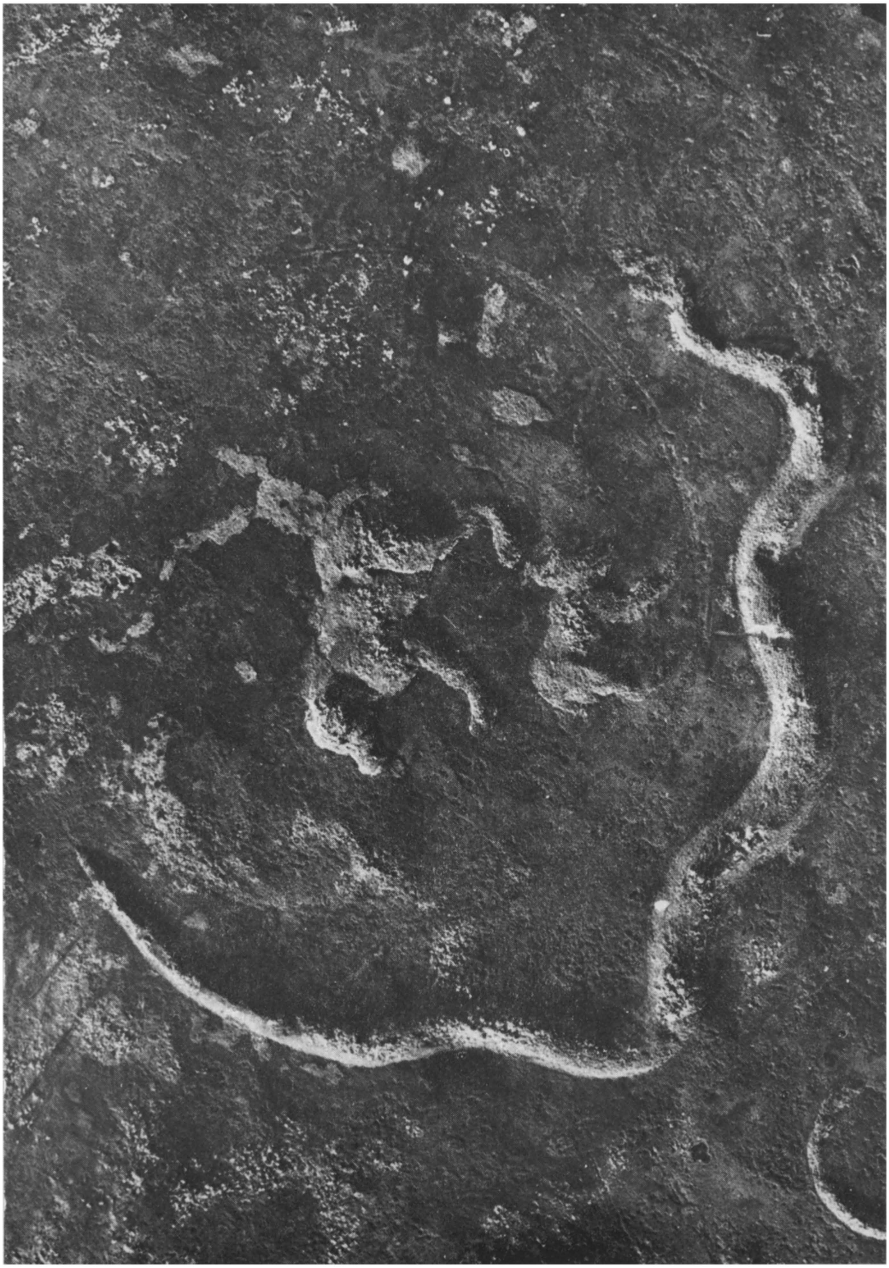

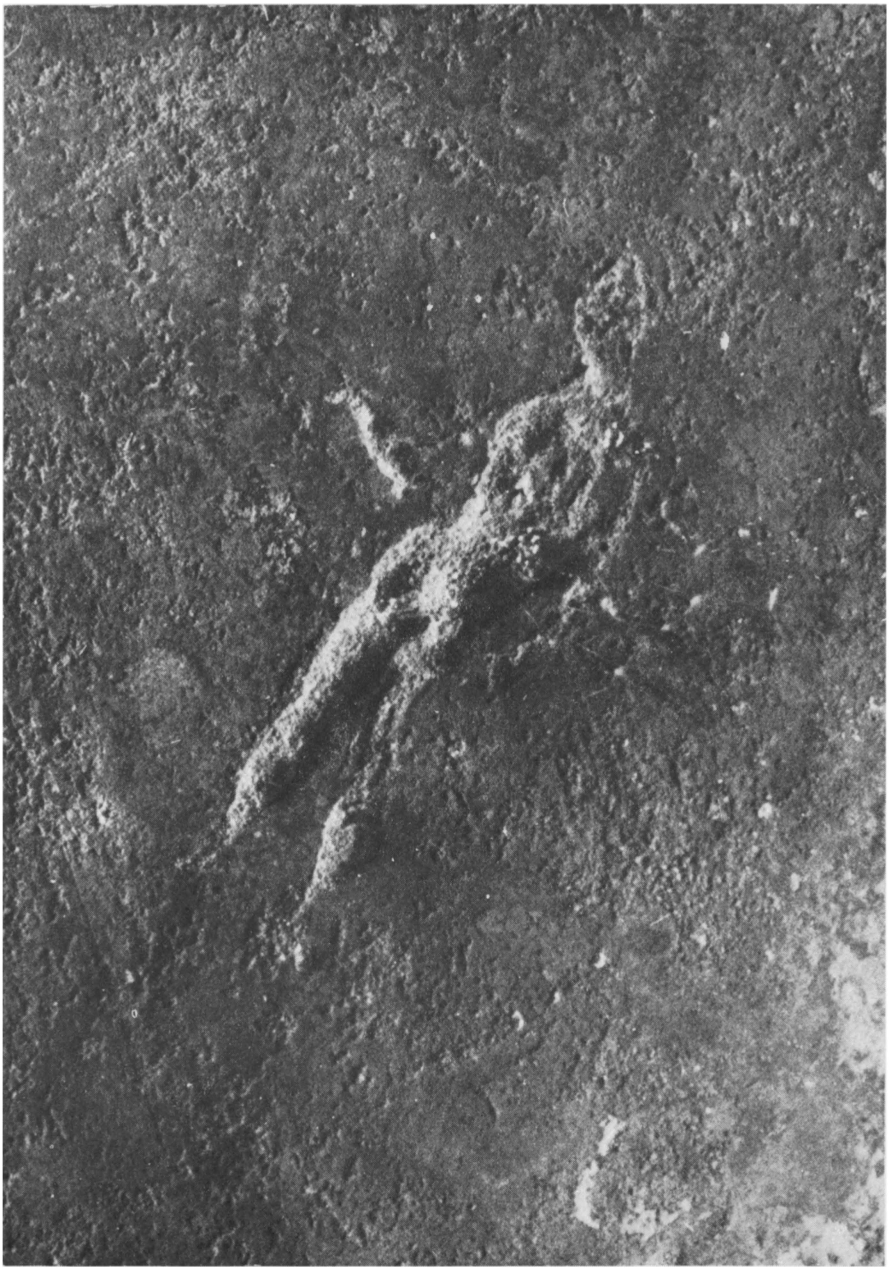

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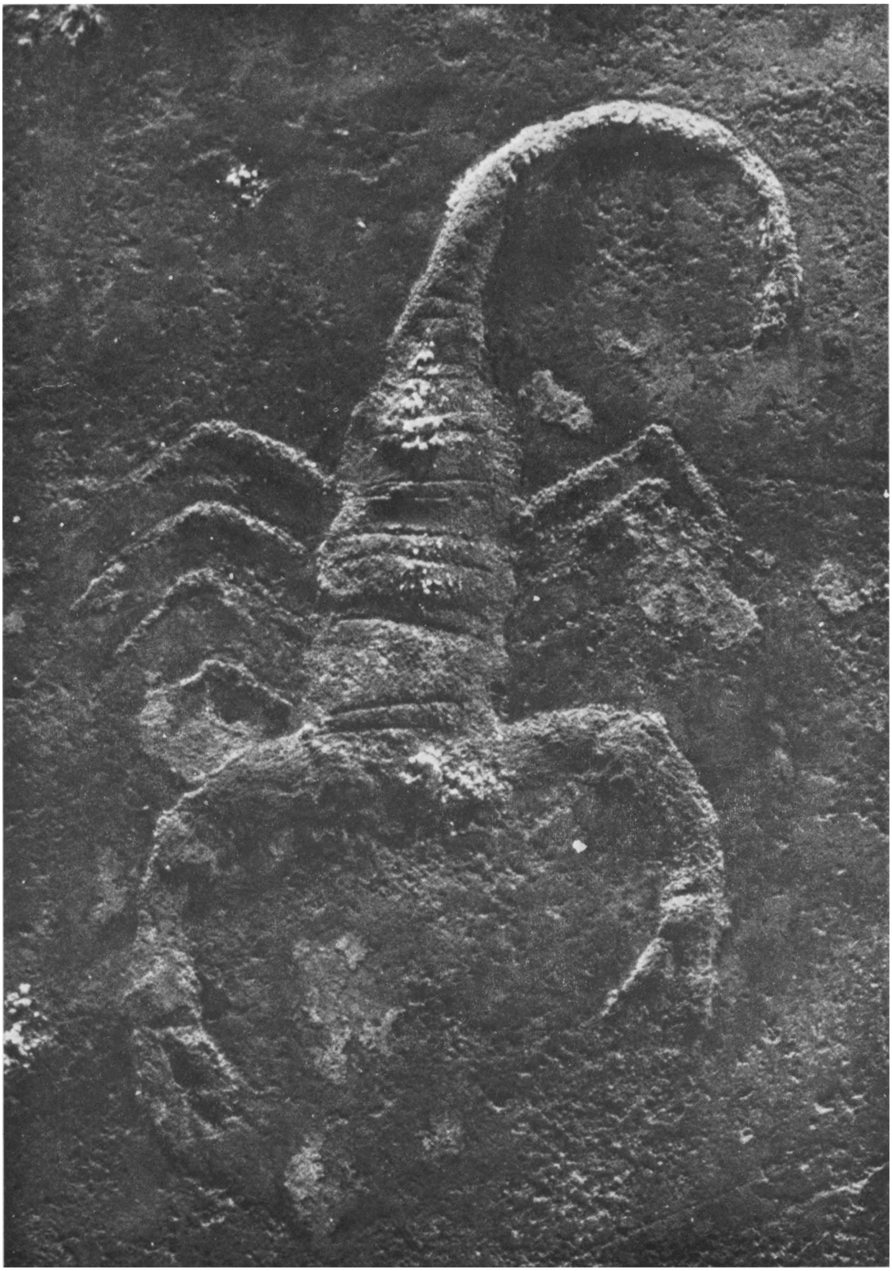

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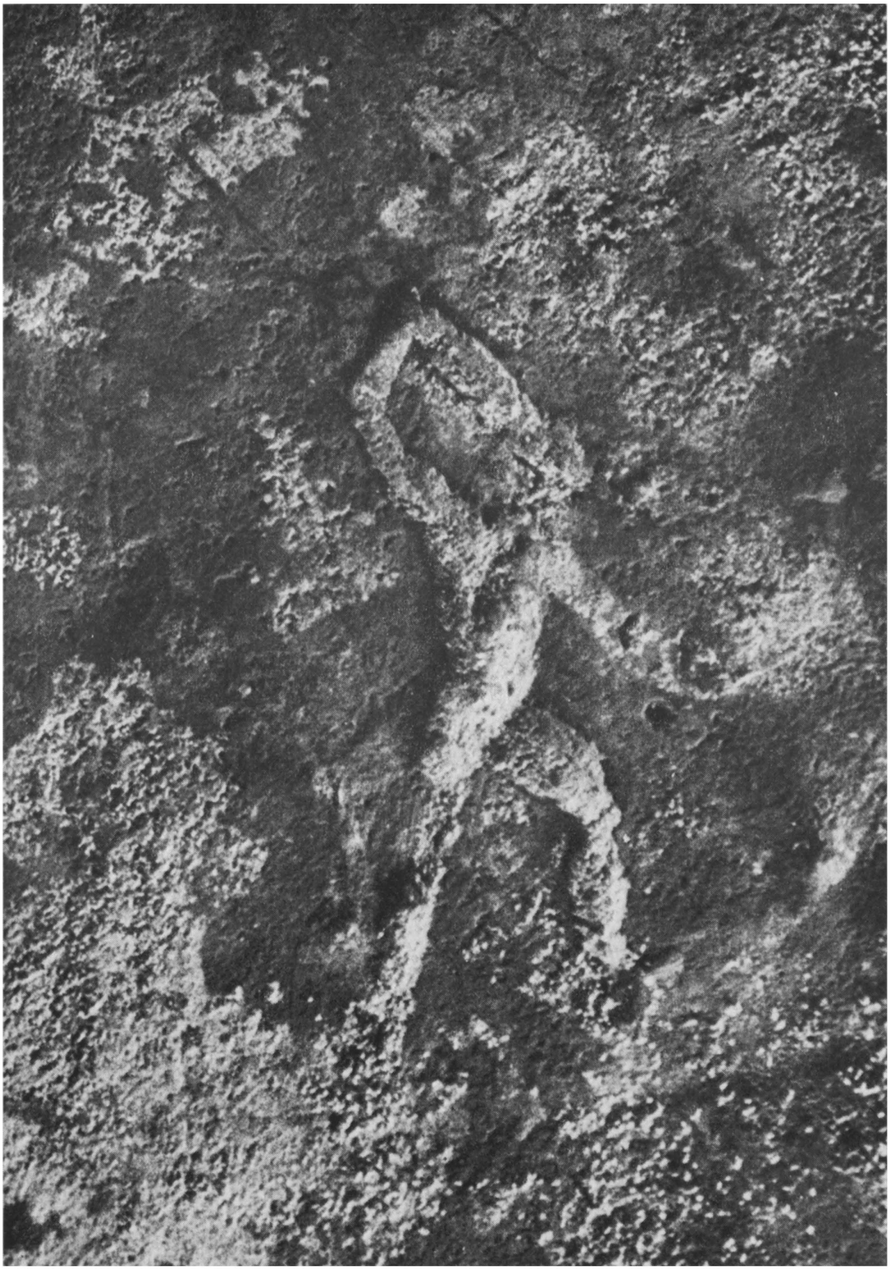

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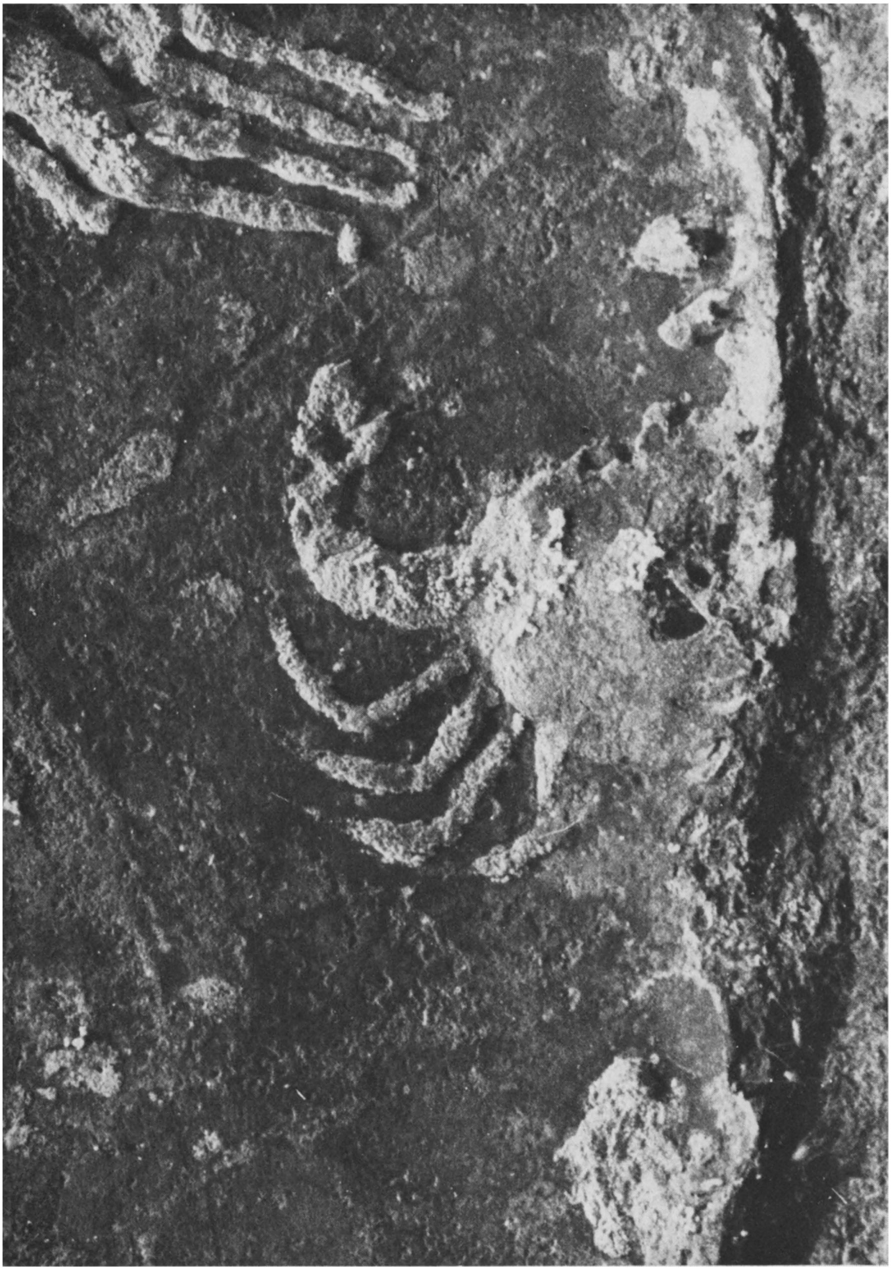

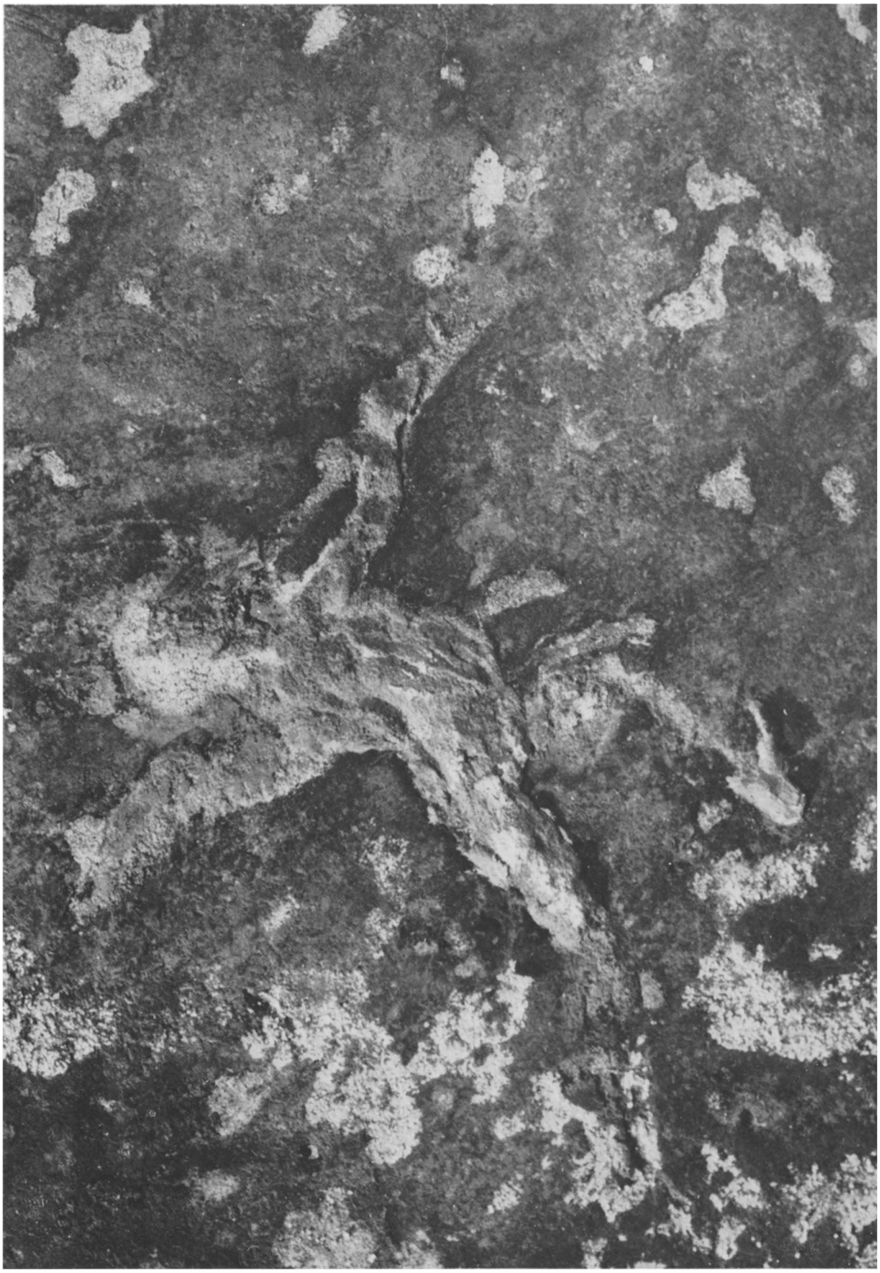

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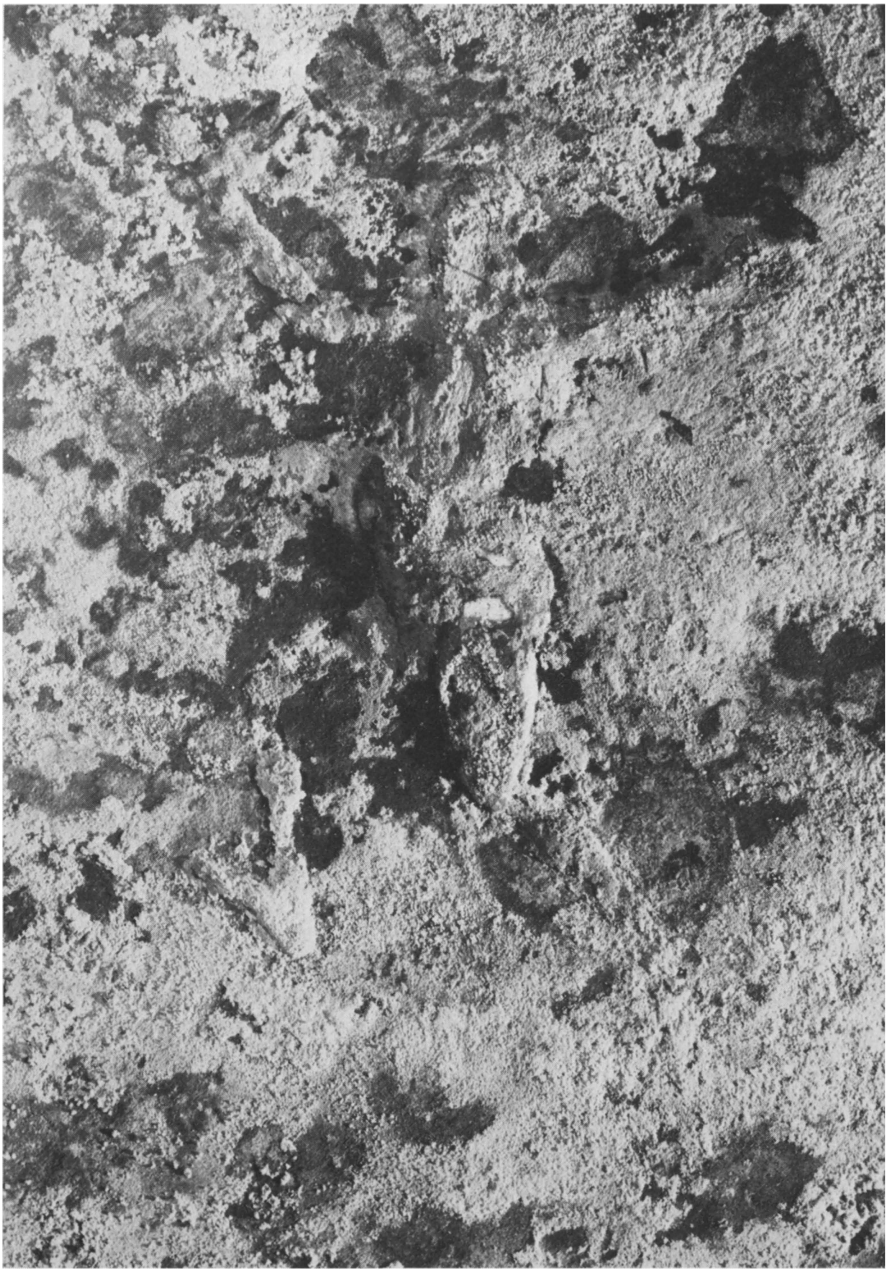

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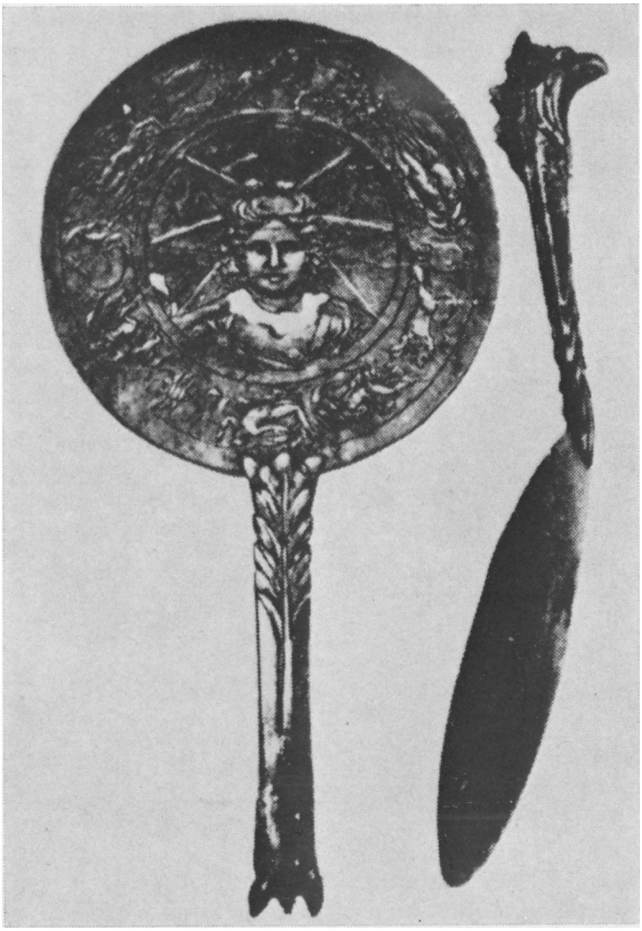


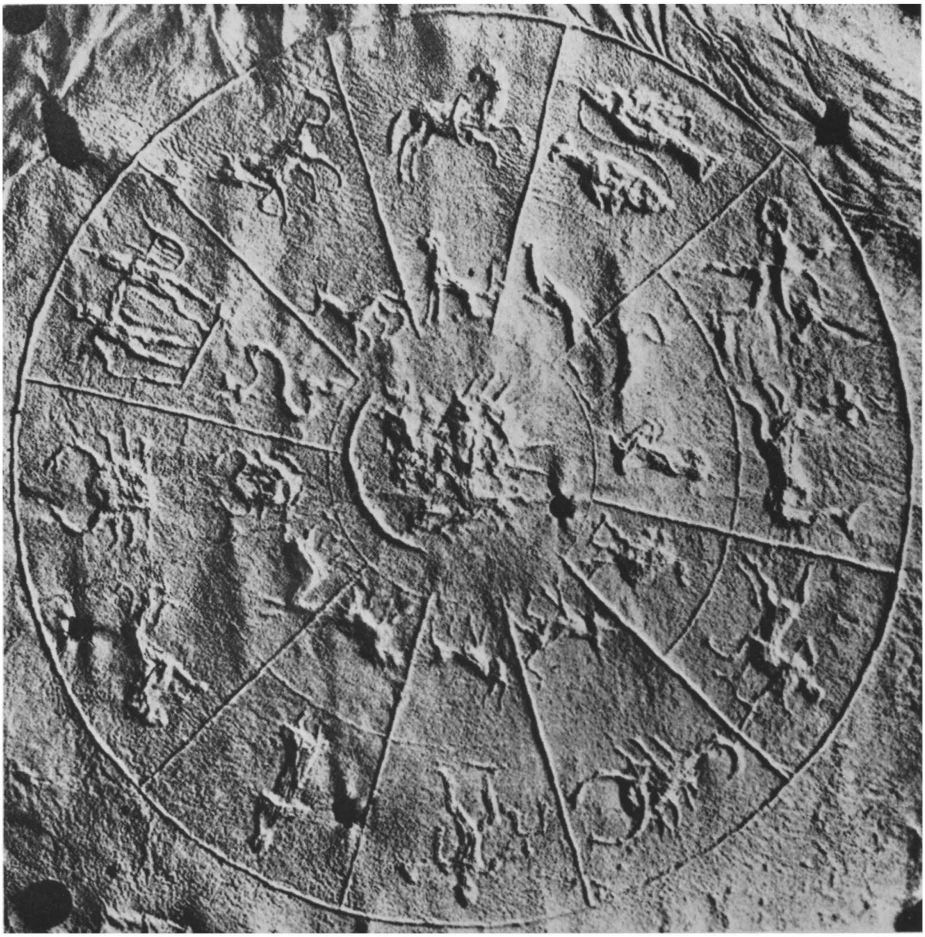
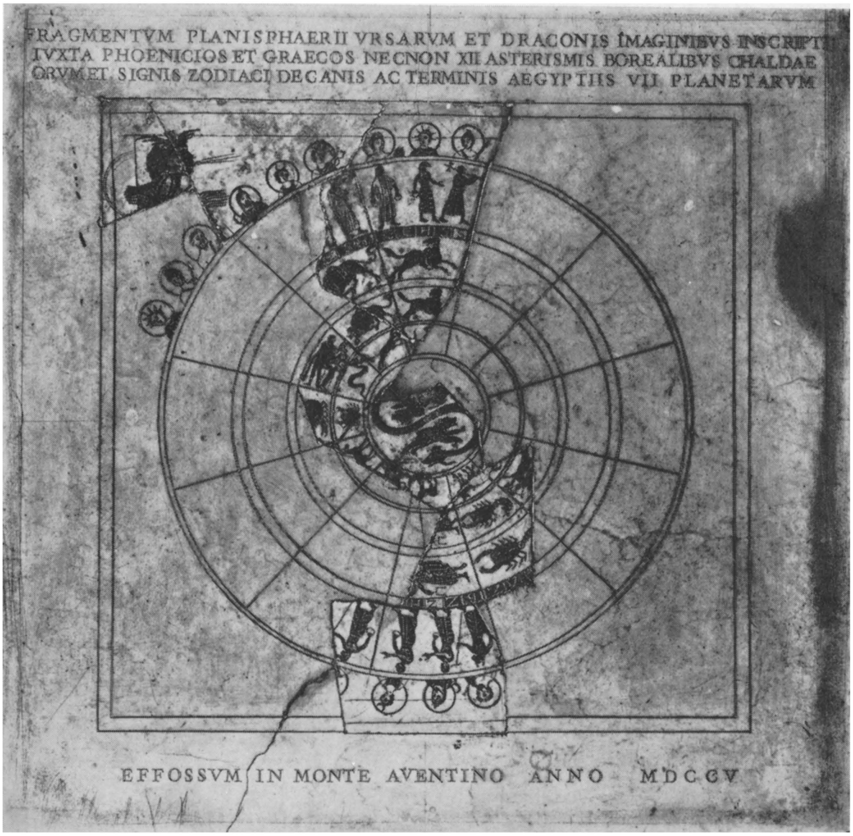


PLATE XXVI


FRAGMENTVM PLANISPHAERII VRSARVM ET DRACONIS IMAGINIBVS INSCRIPT
IVXTA PHOENICIOS ET GRAECOS NECNON XII ASTERISMIS BOREALIBVS CHALDAE
ORVM ET SIGNIS ZODIACI DECANIS AC TERMINIS AEGYPTIIS VII PLANETARVM
EFFOSSVM IN MONTE AVENTINO ANNO MDCCV

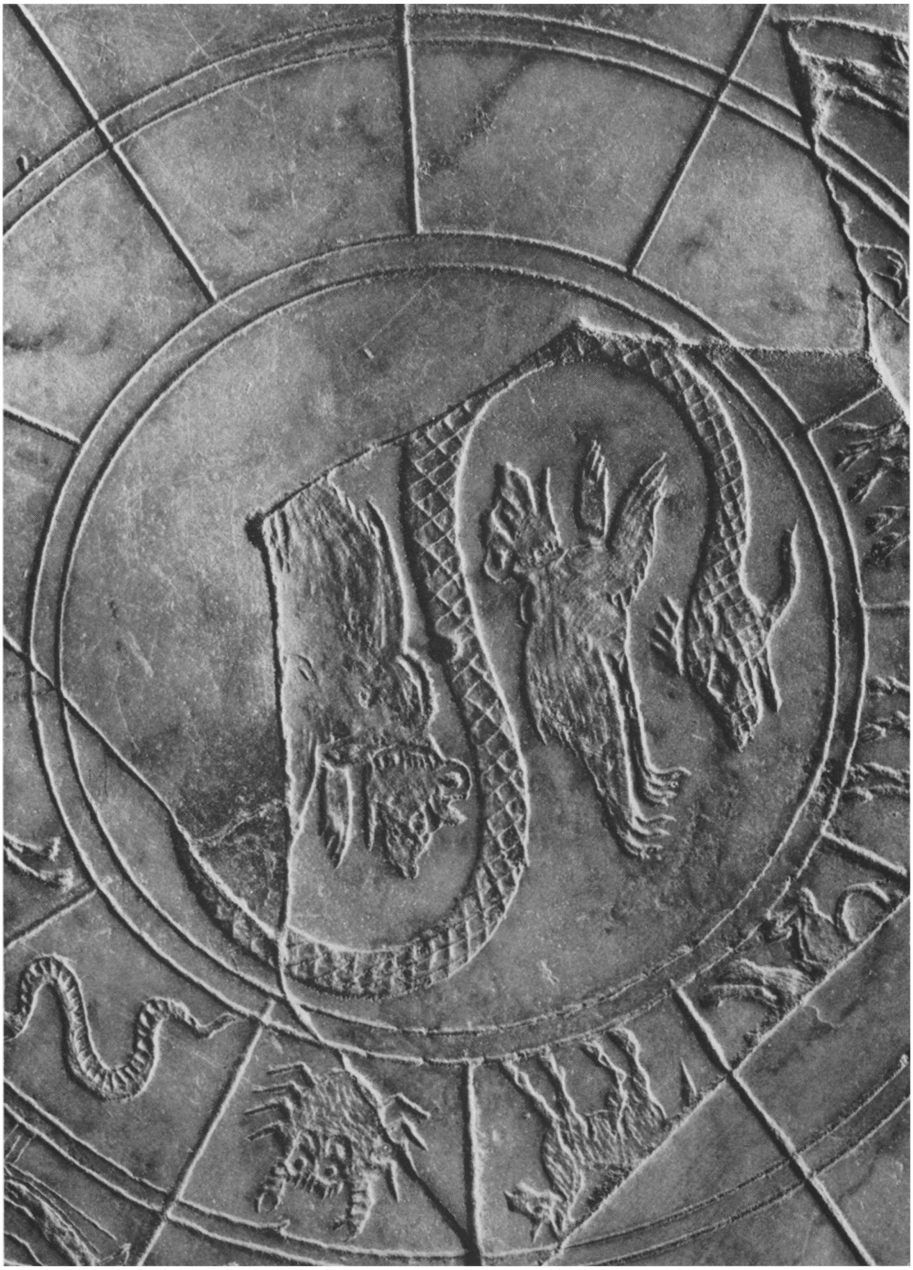
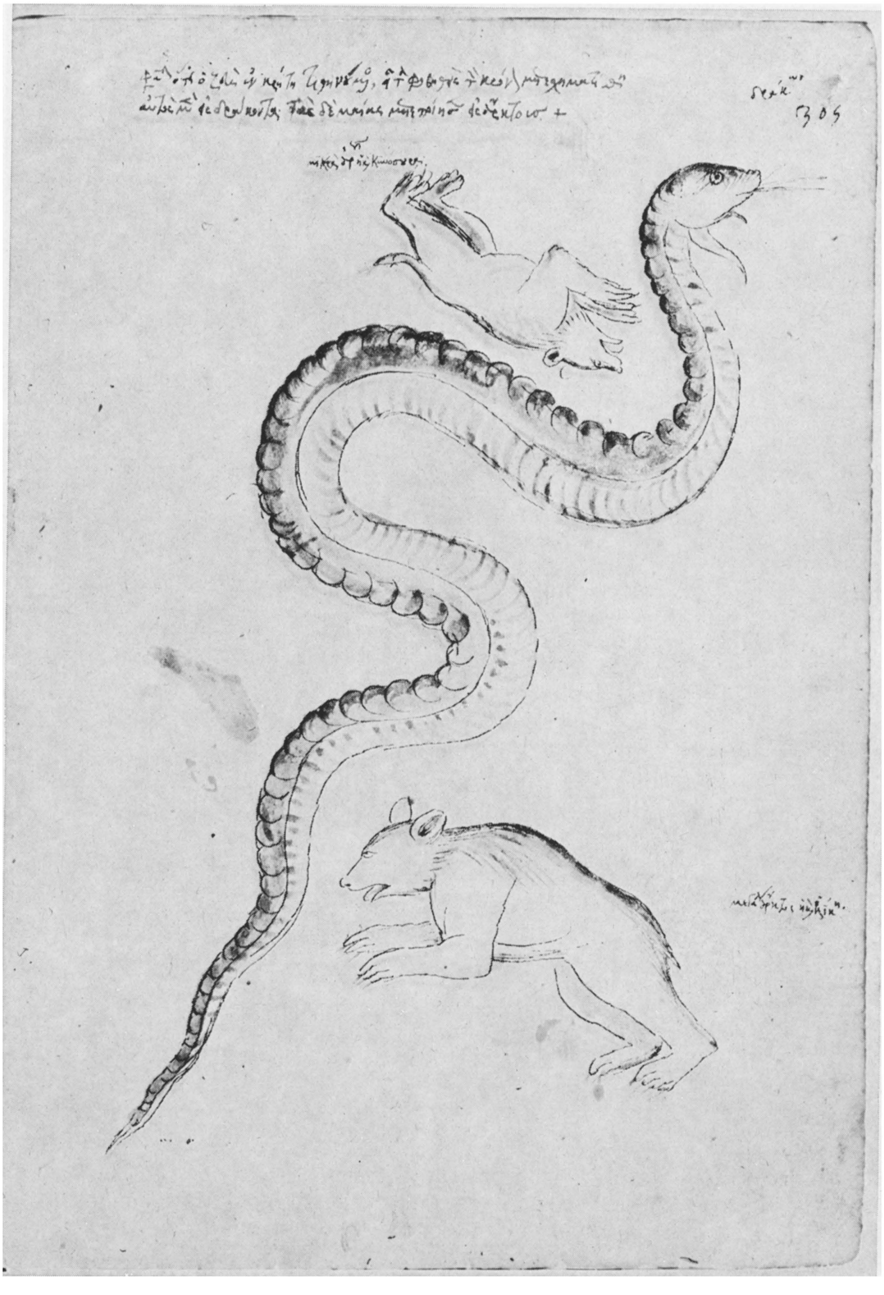


Plate XXVIII



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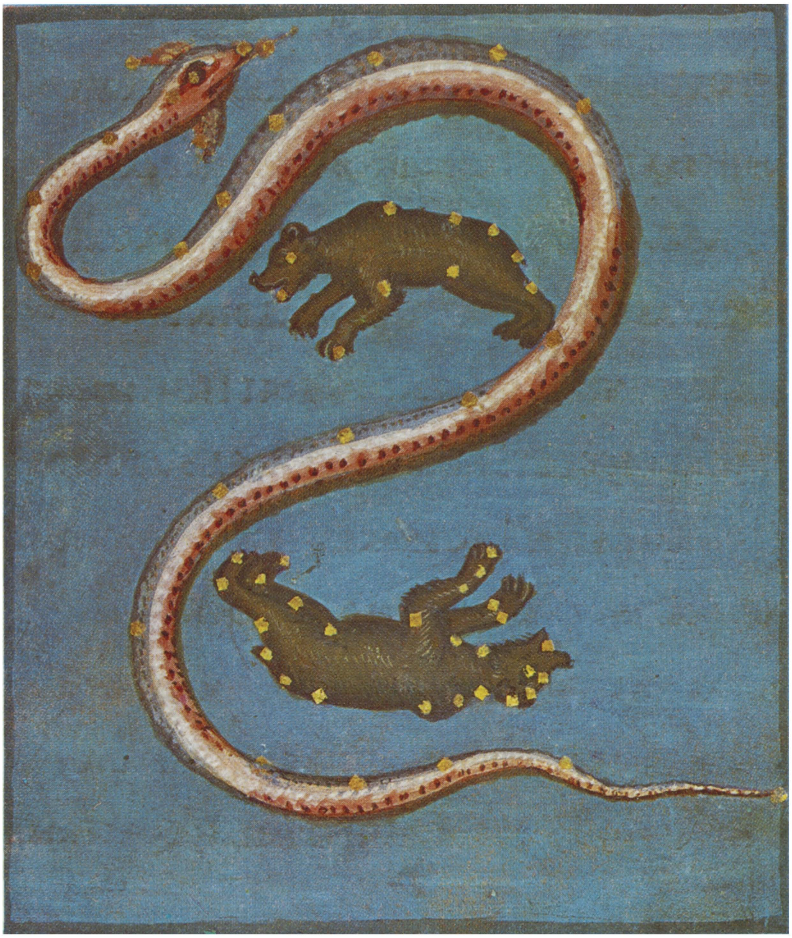

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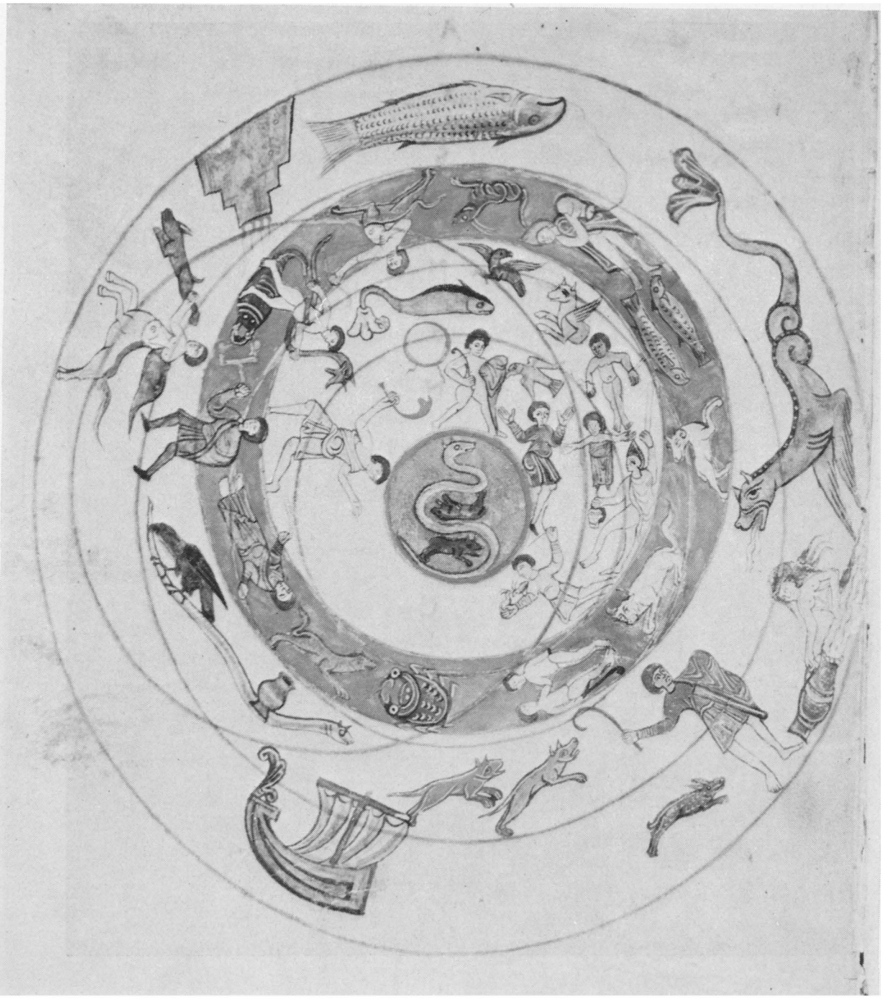


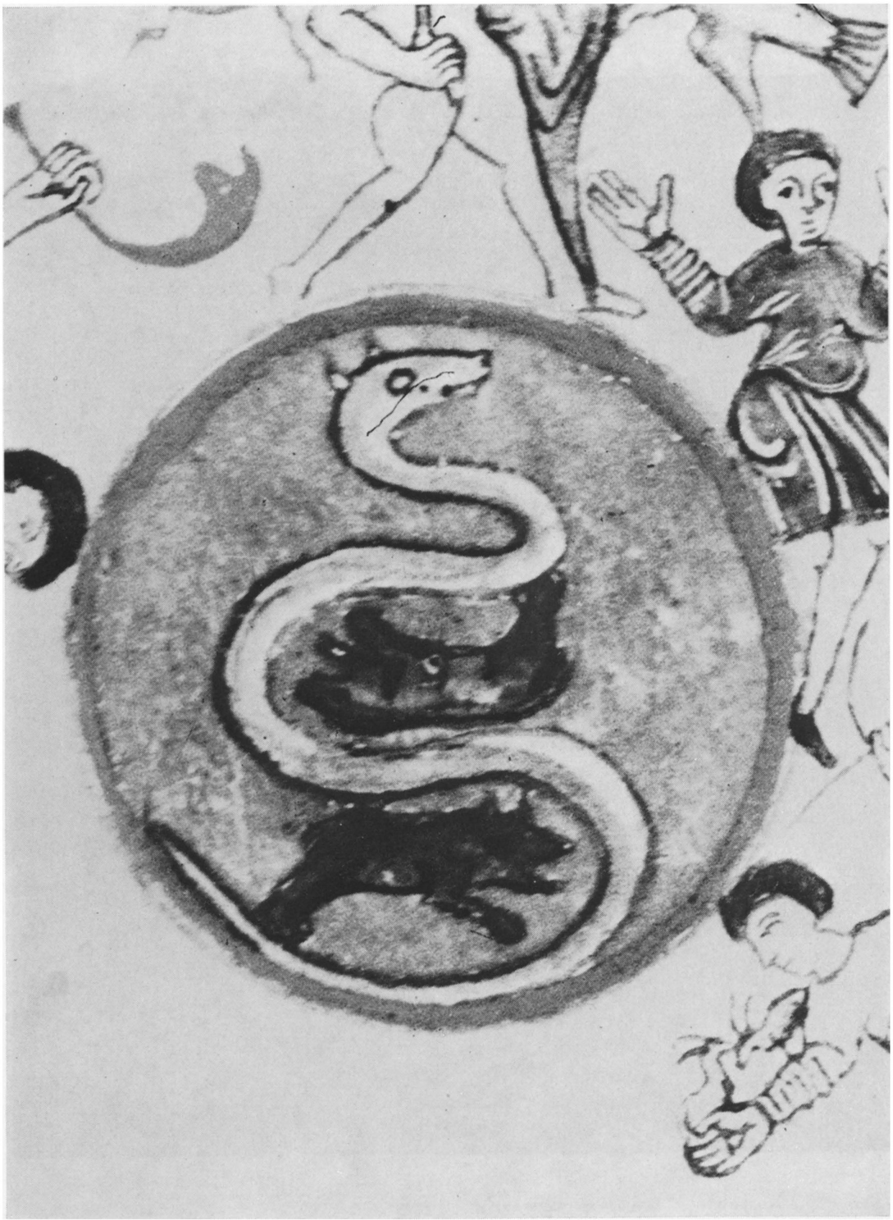
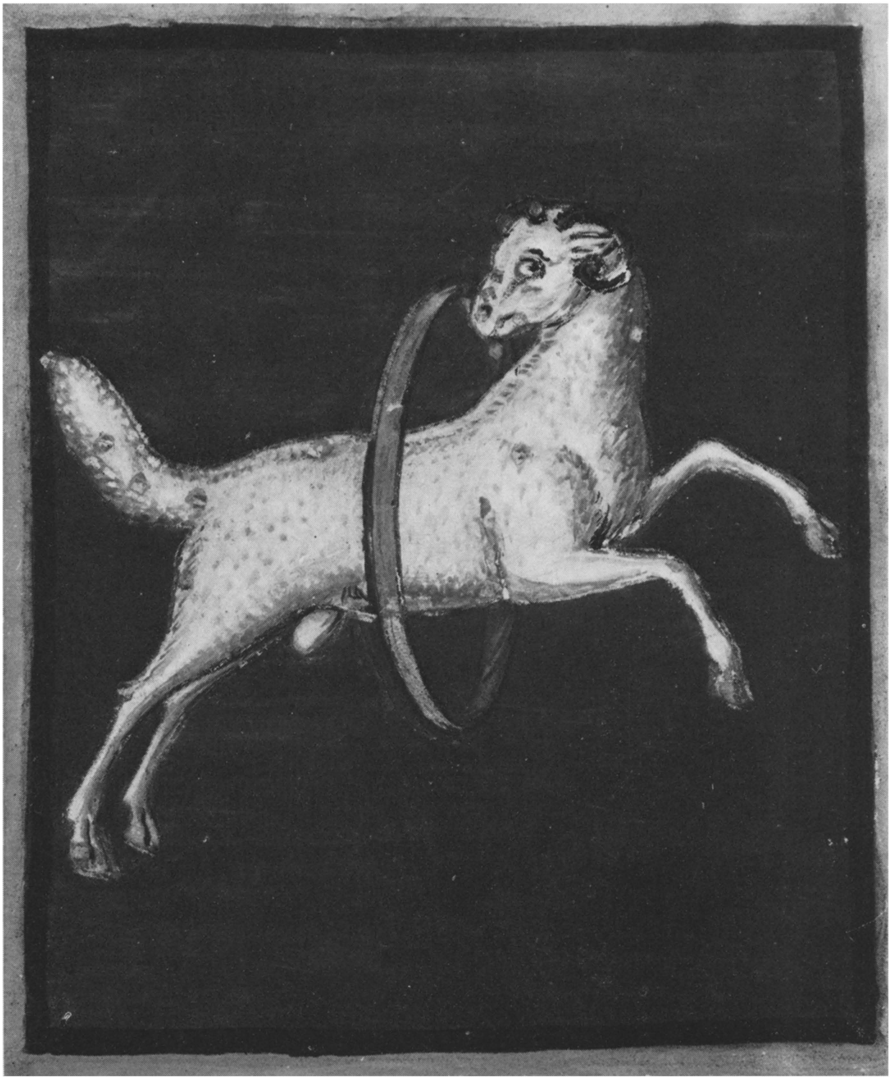


Plate XXXII



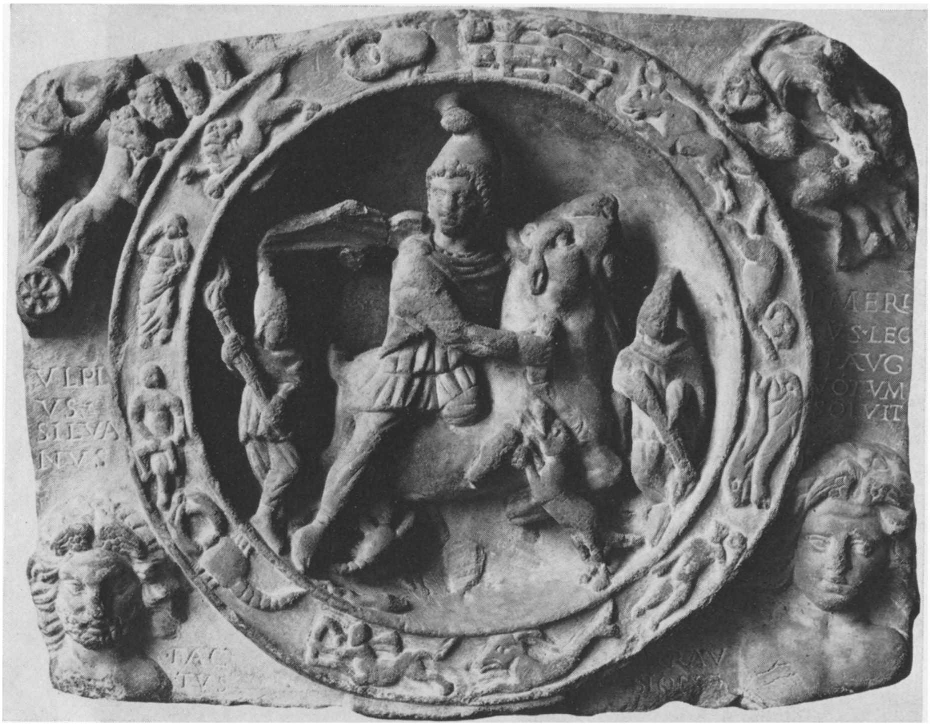

VLPI
VS
SILVA
NVS
FAC
TVS
MERI
VS·LEG
II AVG
VOTVM
SOLVIT
ARAV
SIONE

PLATE XXXIV